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*Manuals of Religious Instruction
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EDITED BY

JOHN PILKINGTON NORRIS, M.A.

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CANON OF BRISTOL

RIVINGTONS

London *Waterloo Place*
Oxford *High Street*
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THE
OLD TESTAMENT

BY
E. I. GREGORY, M.A.
VICAR OF HALBERTON

FOURTH YEAR'S COURSE

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

IN this Manual the divisions of the Psalter in the Prayer Book for use at Morning and Evening Prayer are marked throughout. But the version followed is that of the Bible. Where there is any marked difference between the Bible and Prayer Book versions it is noted.

LESSON I.

HEBREW POETRY—THE PSALTER.

THE Hebrews were accustomed from the very earliest times to give expression to their feelings, and especially their religious feelings, by means of poetry. The Old Testament, beside having several distinctly poetical books, is full of fragments of poetry, handed down some of them from exceedingly remote times. Of these undoubtedly the two oldest are the short songs of the two Lamechs.¹ There are others also, such as the short hymns with which the setting forward of the Ark and its resting again were accompanied,² the Song or Hymn of the Well,³ and the song of victory over Heshbon.⁴ Beside these shorter compositions, there are several longer and complete poems. Such are the Song of Moses and Miriam after the Exodus,⁵ the grand hymn closing the official life of Moses,⁶ the Song of Deborah,⁷ the Song of Hannah,⁸ the Lament of David over Saul and Jonathan.⁹ In

¹ Gen. iv. 23, 24, v. 29.

² Numb. xxi. 17, 18.

³ Exod. xv.

⁴ Judges v.

⁵ 2 Sam. i. 17-27.

⁶ Numb. x. 35, 36.

⁷ Numb. xxi. 27-30.

⁸ Deut. xxxii.

⁹ 1 Sam. ii.

later times, after David, we have the Hymn of Jonah,¹ the Psalm of Hezekiah,² the Prayer of Habakkuk,³ and the Lamentations of Jeremiah. In fact, there was scarcely any event of importance connected either with national or family life which did not call forth some expression of the poetic feeling so strong within them.

Nor was this national gift of poetry left simply to the guidance of natural instinct. The people had scarcely consolidated their conquest of the Promised Land, when schools of the prophets were established by Samuel, in which, without doubt, one great branch of instruction was the cultivation of poetry and its sister art of music.⁴ It was however under the auspices of David, that the poetry of the Hebrew nation reached its highest development. He himself was the greatest poet of his nation, and by his costly and elaborate arrangements for the music of public worship, he not only took means of the best possible kind to preserve the poetic spirit of the people, but he taught them also how it could find its highest and purest exercise in the praise and adoration of the great Jehovah. And when the nation was in evil plight, or the individual soul depressed and low, he showed them how even then the hymn, or the prayer in the form of a hymn, was the one great refuge and source of comfort.

The poetic spirit of the nation survived all its troubles, so that even during and after the sad times of the Babylonish captivity were written some of the most beautiful and soul-stirring poems in the whole of the Old Testament.

The chief characteristic of Hebrew poetry is what is

¹ ch ii.

² ii.

³ Isa. xxxviii.

⁴ See especially 1 Sam. x. 5-10.

called its *Parallelism*. Very few, if any real traces of rhyme or metre have been found, but this remarkable feature of *Parallelism* is constantly observable. Bishop Lowth defines this to be "the correspondence of one verse or line with another." It is found in the very earliest specimens of Hebrew poetry extant.¹ Parallelism assumes a variety of forms, the chief of which are (1) The Direct, (2) The Introverted, (3) The Antithetic, (4) The Constructive.

In the first kind, or direct parallelism, the thought of the first line is repeated in the second, of the third line in the fourth, and so on. An example of this is the following :—

" Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath He cast into the sea ;
His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea :
The depths have covered them :
They sank into the bottom as a stone.
Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power ;
Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy."²

And again—

" Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD,
That delighteth greatly in His commandments."³

This kind of parallelism is the most common. In the second or *introverted* kind the first line is parallel to the last, the second to the last but one, and so on. As an instance we may take the following :—

" The idols of the heathen are silver and gold :
The work of men's hands.
They have mouths, but they speak not ;
Eyes have they, but they see not

¹ As for instance in the song of the Cainite Lamech, Gen. iv. 23, 24.

² Exod. xv. 4-6.

³ Ps. cxii. 1.

They have ears, but they hear not ;
 Neither is there any breath in their mouths.
 They that make them are like unto them :
 So is every one that trusteth in them."¹

Here we note that the first and eighth lines speak of the heathen who trust in idols; the second and seventh of those who make them; the third and sixth of the idols' mouths; the fourth and fifth of their eyes and ears.

A third and very frequent kind of parallelism, especially in the Proverbs, is the *antithetic*, in which two ideas are contrasted. Thus,—

"A wise son rejoiceth his father :
 But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother."²

In the fourth or *constructive* kind of parallelism the correspondence is not one of thought or idea, but consists simply in the form of the sentences. An example of this kind is the following :—

"Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap ;
 Thou shalt tread the olives, but shalt not anoint thee with oil ;
 And sweet wine, but shalt not drink wine."³

Beside this chief feature of Hebrew poetry, there appears frequently a remarkable fondness for acrostics, or an alphabetical arrangement of the verses. The most famous example of this is Ps. cxix., in which there are twenty-two stanzas of eight verses each, the number of stanzas corresponding to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Each stanza commences with a new letter, each verse of a stanza begins with the same letter.⁴ The Lamentations of Jeremiah

¹ Ps. cxxxv. 15-18.

² Prov. x. 1.

³ Mic. vi. 15.

⁴ The other alphabetical Psalms are xxv., xxxiv., xxxvii. cxl., cxli., cxix., cxlv., and imperfectly ix., x. This alphabetic order is not preserved in our translations.

offer a remarkable instance of this method of arrangement. The first four chapters are all arranged alphabetically, each verse beginning with a new letter in regular sequence. The third chapter however is divided by stanzas, not verses, each stanza consisting of three verses, in a manner similar to Ps. cxix. The strictly poetical books of the Bible are those of Job, the Psalms, Proverbs, the Song of Solomon, and the Lamentations of Jeremiah, while large passages of the Prophets are also poetical.

In this Manual we shall confine ourselves to the Psalms, the book of all others in the Old Testament dear to the Christian heart.

Gradual formation of the Psalter. The Psalter is divided into five books, which were originally distinct collections.

BOOK.	PSALMS.
I. . . .	I. to XLI.
II. . . .	XLII. to LXXII.
III. . . .	LXXIII. to LXXXIX.
IV. . . .	XC. to CVI.
V. . . .	CVII. to CL.

Of these Books I. and II. were probably collected early in Solomon's reign: they contain about sixty of David's hymns. Book III. was probably collected in the reign of Jehoshaphat or of Hezekiah.¹ The Fourth Book contains for the most part Psalms of the times of Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah, but it was not collected apparently till after the Captivity.² The Fifth Book

¹ Cp. 2 Chron. xx. 21, 28, xxix. 30.

² Ps. cii. belongs to the times of the Captivity.

has many Psalms of thanksgiving for the return from the Captivity, and may contain Psalms as late as the time of Malachi. Each book closes with a doxology, added to the last Psalm of the group by the compiler. The doxology of the Fifth Book is composed of the whole of the last Psalm. The arrangement of the Psalms is generally chronological; but some Psalms seem brought together by reason of similarity of subject, or of teaching, or of authorship, or of musical setting.¹

The Titles or Inscriptions. Two-thirds of the Psalms have headings or inscriptions, which relate (1) to the music to which the Psalm was to be sung, or to its liturgical character; (2) to the authorship; (3) to the circumstances under which the Psalm was composed.

It was customary, as it would seem from Jonah ii., Isaiah xxxviii. 9, and Habakkuk iii.,² for the authors of Psalms generally to prefix their names to the Psalms which they composed, and to add frequently some directions for the use of the Psalm or some note of the circumstances under which it was written. David, without doubt, did the same, and others also. Many of the inscriptions are certainly trustworthy, as old as the Psalms themselves. Others are traditional. In some cases there were two traditions, and in their uncertainty which to follow, those who affixed the titles placed both traditions at the head of the Psalm.³ The fact that these inscriptions were already existing

¹ Thus Psalms l. and li. both treat of the spiritual character of all true worship, and for this reason seem to have been placed close together. In like manner the "Songs of Degrees" (Ps. cxx—cxxxiv.) are all placed together.

² See also Gen. iv. 23, xlix. 1, 2; Exod. xv. 1; Deut. xxxi. 30; Judg. v. 1; 1 Sam. ii. 1; 2 Sam. i. 17, xxii. 1, xxiii. 1.

³ See Ps. lxxxviii. and the LXX. version of Ps. cxxxvii. and cxxxviii.

and were even misunderstood, when the Greek translation of the Old Testament was made, proves their high antiquity.

The teaching of the Psalms. Throughout the Psalms great delight is shown in the services of God's Temple, and in the observances of holy times and seasons; but these are felt to be of no avail, unless there goes with them humility of heart and real devotion and adoration of the soul. Occasionally the teaching rises almost, if not quite, to a Christian level, as when in Ps. li., for instance, the necessity for a clean heart, for a broken and a contrite heart, for a broken spirit, is insisted upon.¹ And if at times there is a vehemence of denunciation (as in Ps. cix.) from which the Christian man shrinks, we must remember that the Israelites of the earlier dispensation had not heard the higher teaching of Jesus Christ—"I say unto you, Love your enemies." Upon such passages Dr. Waterland remarks, "He that hath God's authority and extraordinary commission to curse, may do it, must do it;" and he adds, quoting from Bishop Wilkins, "If others shall presume upon it because of their example, they will justly fall under the rebuke of our Saviour, 'Ye know not what spirit ye are of.'"²

The hope of a future life in the Psalms. Our Lord teaches us that the doctrine of a future life was really contained in God's announcement of Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, after their death;³ and the Epistle to the Hebrews shows that the ancient Fathers, Patriarchs, and heroes of the Faith did look

¹ See also Ps. xxxiv. 18.

² Luke ix. 55; see Waterland's *Scripture Vindicated*.

³ Matt. xxiii. 32.

forward to a fulfilment after this life of the promises of God made to them, and which they did not realize here.¹ So in the Psalms there are undoubted indications of a hope and belief in a future life animating the hearts of the more spiritual members of the Hebrew people, although this belief did not become an article of *national* faith until the times of the Captivity. That epoch of deep national abasement was the age of the real awakening of hopes and desires for the future, which previous generations did not possess. Yet in such passages as the following we have very clear expressions of the belief of the Psalmist;—"God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for He shall receive me."² "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me into glory."³ "My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."⁴

The prophecies concerning our Lord in the Psalms. Psalms containing such prophecies are called Messianic. These Psalms undoubtedly refer in a first sense to David or Solomon or some one else, but in a second and still higher sense they refer, not necessarily in every verse, to the Messiah, sometimes in His exaltation, sometimes in His humiliation. Amongst these Psalms some are pre-eminently prophetic of Christ, and are quoted as such in the New Testament. The second, for instance, is very often alluded to, and distinctly said to be a conscious utterance of David concerning the Messiah.⁵ After the release of Peter and John from prison, the disciples took up the opening

¹ Heb. xi. 13-16.

² Ps. xlix. 15.

³ Ps. lxxiii. 24.

⁴ Ps. lxxiii. 26. The belief is also implied in Ps. xxii. 26, xli. 12, lii. 8, 9, lxiii. cxviii. 17.

⁵ Acts iv. 25.

strain of this Psalm as having been fulfilled in the person of the "Holy Child Jesus." St. Paul, preaching at Antioch, declared that the seventh verse, "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee,"² had been fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the first begotten from the dead. The same verse is twice quoted in the Epistle to the Hebrews as prophetic of the Eternal Sonship and Divinity of our Blessed Lord.³ The ninth verse is quoted by our Lord as a promise to him who should overcome for His sake, and of our Lord Himself, as descriptive of His rule over the nations.⁴ In the "wrath of the Lamb" (Rev. vi. 16) we have allusion to the last verse.

Again, in Ps. xxii. we have a wonderfully vivid anticipation of the Redeemer's Passion; in Ps. xlv. the grace, glory and beauty of the Messiah's kingdom is depicted; in Ps. xvi., as both St. Peter and St. Paul teach us,⁴ our Lord's resurrection is prophesied of; Ps. xxiv. and Ps. xlvii. speak of His ascension, while in Psalms xxi., xlv. and cx. we have declared His divine majesty and glory, and the eternity of His priesthood.⁵

Christian use of the Psalms. (1) *By the Church.* From the earliest times the Christian Church has found in the Psalms a treasure and storehouse of devotion. As early as the second century they were chanted in the public worship of the Church. Ever since, amongst all sections of Christians, the Psalms have occupied a very large space in their services. Nor can we wonder at this, when we consider how the

² Acts xiii. 33.

³ Heb. i. 5, v. 5.

⁴ Rev. ii. 27, xix. 15.

⁵ Acts ii. 27, xiii. 35.

⁶ There are many other Messianic Psalms, amongst them are Psalms l., lxix., lxxii.

fortunes of the Hebrew nation, and the inner lives of their saints, are set forth in the Psalms, and express yearnings and hopes, sorrows and joys common to all men, more especially to those who believe in that Divine Lord and Saviour Who died for them and rose again, and Whose sufferings, triumph and glory are so fully spoken of, centuries before, in the prophetic utterances of this most precious Book.

(2) *By individuals.* The Psalms express in a most especial manner the personal religion of those who wrote them. Hence in their depth of sorrow, repentance and suffering; in their heights of exuberant fancy and joy; in their utterances of faith, hope and love, they speak to men of every age. To the sick and sorrowful they are especially precious. "Let there be any grief or disease," says Hooker, "incident unto the soul of man, any wound or sickness named, for which there is not in this treasure-house a present comfortable remedy at all times ready to be found."¹ God's saints have always found in the Psalms words which expressed better than any others the deepest and most inmost feelings of their hearts. Every age and time of life finds in them that which specially suits itself. To the young this book teaches many a lesson and affords many a help.

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor standeth in the way of sinners,
Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful;
But his delight is in the law of the LORD;
And in His law doth he meditate day and night."²

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?
By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word."³

¹ *Ecc. Polity*, v. 37.

² Ps. i. 1, 2.

³ Ps. cxix. 9.

LESSON II.

NOTE.—The following abbreviations are used. A. V. = Authorized Version; P. B. V. = Prayer Book Version; LXX. = Septuagint, or Greek Translation used by the Apostles.

FIRST DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM I.

Historical occasion. This Psalm contains no direct reference to the history of the Israelites, but may be regarded as an introduction to the whole Psalter.

Christian application. The Psalm describes the beauty of the spiritual life, and reminds us in its opening of both the commencement and the close of the Sermon on the Mount.

Structure. 1-3. The blessedness of the righteous; 4-6. The unhappiness of the wicked.

3. Very forcible to a dweller in a hot dry country. Meditation in God's law advances personal holiness, out of which spring the fruits of the Spirit. Cp. Jer. xvii. 7, 8; Gal. v. 22-25; Rev. xxii. 2.

6. *Knoweth.* Watches over. Psa. xxxi. 7; Job xxiii. 10.

PSALM II.

Historical occasion. Doubtful. Perhaps written by David when the Syrians and Ammonites threatened him (2 Sam. viii.).

Christian application. The words clearly point to the Messiah, to Whom it is referred in the Acts of the

Apostles, and in the Epistle to the Hebrews; Acts iv. 25; Heb. i. 5. It is a proper Psalm for Easter Day.

Structure. It is dramatic. 1-3. A chorus or singer; 4-6. Jehovah speaks; 7-9. Messiah announces His commission; 10-12. The chorus or singer warns the enemies of the Messiah (or Christ) to submit.

2. *His Anointed.* His Messiah or Christ. Cp. 1 Sam. ii. 10.

12. *Kiss the Son.* Do homage to the Son.

PSALM III.

Historical occasion. Absalom's rebellion seems to have been the occasion of this Psalm. It is, at any rate, a morning hymn (ver. 5), after a day of trouble, and what would have been a night of anxiety but for the sense of God's care.

Christian application. Christ's disciples may understand this Psalm as spoken by their Lord in His sufferings and agony, Christ speaking in the person of David.

Structure. It may be divided into four parts: (1) declaration of trouble (1, 2); (2) refuge in the trouble (3, 4); (3) happy result of the refuge (5, 6); (4) prayer for help (7, 8).

1. *How many, etc.* The greater part of the nation. Cp. 2 Sam. xvi. 15, xvii. 1, 11-13.

6. *Set themselves.* A military phrase. 1 Sam. xvii. 2; 1 Kings xx. 12.

PSALM IV.

Historical occasion. Very probably the same as that of the preceding Psalm. It is an evening hymn (ver. 8).

Christian application. The Psalm reminds the Christian of the true refuge in distress, and of Christ the true Light (ver. 6).

Structure. 1. Prayer; 2-5. Warning to enemies; 6-8. His Trust in God fills the Psalmist with peace.

1. *God of my righteousness*,—Thou who knowest and maintainest my righteousness against mine enemies. Ps. lix. 10.

4. *Stand in awe*. Tremble. Quoted by St. Paul from the LXX. in Eph. iv. 26.

5. *Sacrifices of righteousness*. Such as will be acceptable with God. Ps. li. 17.

6. *There be many*. All the Psalmist's despondent friends.

8. *Both*. David so trusts in God, that the moment he lies down he goes to sleep.

PSALM V.

Historical occasion. None apparent. It is a morning hymn (ver. 3).

Christian application. Resort to prayer and the ordinances of God's house are the Christian's true resource in times of trial.

Structure. 1, 2. An introduction; 3-7. The good man addresses God with confidence; 8-12. The prayer offered by the Psalmist.

1, 2. Prayer to be heard. *Meditation*, silent prayer; *voice of my cry*, audible prayer.

7. *Thy House,—Thy Holy Temple*. Not the Temple of Solomon, but the Sanctuary at Shiloh. 1 Sam. i. 9, iii. 3. But David may be using the words of God's spiritual presence in the soul.

9. Quoted by St. Paul, Rom. iii. 13.

12. *Shield*. The large shield, serving as a defence for the whole body. 1 Sam. xvii. 7.

FIRST DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM VI.

Historical occasion. Perhaps some time of bodily sickness, brought on by mental anxiety.

Christian application. A confession of sin, and a prayer for deliverance from spiritual enemies. It is the first of the so-called Penitential Psalms, and is appointed by the Church for use on Ash-Wednesday.

Structure. 1-7. Prayer for deliverance in the time of trouble; 8-10. Joyful assurance that the prayer has been heard.

1. Repeated by Jeremiah (x. 24).

3. *My soul.* The sickness of the body affects the soul. Cp. John xii. 27; Ps. xlii. 6, 7.

How long? Ps. lxxix. 5.

5. The Old Testament saint had not that assured sense of the life everlasting which the Christian has (2 Tim. i. 10). He seems specially to have dreaded an early death. Cp. Ps. xxx. 9, lxxxviii. 11, etc.; Isa. xxxviii. 18.

6, 7. Express the agonies of the soul in its wrestlings with sin and faithlessness.

PSALM VII.

Historical occasion. This is perhaps to be found in 1 Sam. xxiv. or 1 Sam. xxvi., but who Cush was is quite uncertain: probably he was one of Saul's party.

Christian application. Jesus Christ is the true refuge of faithful souls (Matt. xi. 28-30). In the great day of judgment God's righteous government over the world will be vindicated.

Structure. 1, 2. David confiding in God; 3-5.

asserts his innocence; and 6-10, appeals to God to judge him and his enemies; 11-16. The manner in which God deals with the wicked.

4. *Yea, I have delivered.* Better, "yea, rather, I have delivered." See 1 Sam. xxiv., xxvi.

7. *For their sakes.* Rather "above it," *i.e.* above the congregation. God is represented as coming down to earth, and gathering all nations around Him for judgment; when judgment has been delivered He returns on high above them. Cp. Gen. xi. 5, 7, xviii. 21; Isa. lxiv. 1.

12. *If he turn not.* "If a man turn not," as in Prayer Book.

15, 16. The evil-doer works his own punishment. Cp. 1 Sam. xxv. 39.

PSALM VIII.

Historical occasion. Written probably in David's early life, when a shepherd-boy at Bethlehem.

Christian application. The Psalm anticipates the Angels' song in Luke ii. 14, and verses 4-6 are applied to Christ in 1 Cor. xv. 27; Heb. ii. 6-9. It is thus very rightly appointed for use on Ascension Day.

2. *Ordained strength.* In LXX. it is "perfected praise," which is quoted by our Lord, Matt. xxi. 16.

5. *Than the angels.* So the LXX. and Heb. ii. 7, 9, which quotes from it. But the Heb. has "than God."

SECOND DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM IX.

Historical occasion. Quite uncertain, but the obscurity of the title "Muth-labben," or "Death of the Son," witnesses to its great antiquity.

Christian application. The Church rejoices, in this Psalm, in the destruction of the enemies of the Truth, and praises her Redeemer and Saviour.

Structure. It is one of the eight alphabetical Psalms; in which each verse, or set of verses, begins with a different letter, generally in strict alphabetical order.

6. *O thou enemy, etc.* Better, "The enemy are perished, they are desolations for ever," such as Sodom, Gomorrha, Nineveh, Babylon. Cp. Rev. xviii. 19-21.

12. *Maketh inquisition for blood.* Acts the part of the "avenger of blood." Gen. ix. 5.

14. *In the gates.* In the most public place, in the market-place, as we might say in England.

The Daughter of Zion. An expression for God's Church and her members.

17. *Shall be turned into hell.* Must return to the unseen place (Hades). The idea is that of returning to the dust (Gen. iii. 19), not of final judgment.

PSALM X.

Historical occasion. Uncertain. The Psalm is anonymous. Joined by the LXX. with Ps. ix. as one Psalm. But they are really two.

Christian application. The Church, suffering from the spirit of Antichrist, makes her prayer to God.

Structure. 1. Prayer to Jehovah in time of distress; 2-11. Condition and character of the ungodly described; 12-18. Prayer to God to arise and show Himself the true God.

4. "All his thoughts are, There is no God," as in the margin, is the best translation.

8. *Villages.* Unwalled towns, specially open to attack.

10. *His strong ones.* His claws.

14. *Thou hast seen it.* In contrast with ver. 11.

16. *Perished out of His land.* Refers perhaps to the overthrow of some of those heathen communities left in the country after its subjugation by Joshua.

PSALM XI.

Historical occasion. Written probably when the rebellion of Absalom was preparing, but the advice referred to in ver. 1 was as yet premature. Others refer its composition to the troubles of David in Saul's reign, and ver. 2 appears rather to countenance this. It may be thus divided ;—1-3. His trust in Jehovah causes David to reject the timid counsels of his friends ; 4-7. The answer of the believer to the question in ver. 3.

Christian application. The Psalm teaches the Christian that he should continue doing his duty. whatever perils may surround him, trusting in the shield of faith in God, Who remains unchangeable. Cp. Hab. ii. 20.

3. *The foundations.* If all justice be overthrown.

5. *Trieth.* Cp. Gen. xxii. 1 ; Job xxiii. 10.

7. *His countenance doth behold.* Rather, "the upright shall behold His countenance," an expression of hope in a future life.

SECOND DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XII.

Historical occasion. Quite uncertain. A Psalm of David. It is dramatic ;—1-4. The singer complains to Jehovah ; 5. Jehovah answers ; 6-8. The singer expresses his faith in Jehovah's promise, and his hope for the future.

Christian application. When faith is waning, the Church must betake herself to prayer; for, whatever the world may say, the Word of Jehovah is pure and tried.

1. For similar complaints about human society, see Isa. lvii. 1; Jer. vii. 28; Mic. vii. 2.

2. For the opposite virtue, cp. Eph. iv. 25.

With a double heart. Lit. "With a heart and a heart," i.e. putting one reason forward, keeping the real one back.

7. *From this generation.* Or, as we might say, from the vices of the society of our time.

PSALM XIII.

Historical occasion. Perhaps may be found in the circumstances described in 1 Sam. xxvii. 1.

Christian application. The Psalm may be well used by the Church, or any one of her members, in times of trial and temptation.

3. *Lighten mine eyes.* Not his spiritual, but his bodily eyes. Cp. 1 Sam. xiv. 27, 29.

PSALM XIV.

Historical occasion. Uncertain, as is that of Ps. liii., which is a kind of second edition of this. It describes, 1. The state of society; 2-7. Jehovah comes down from heaven to see, and records what He sees. Cp. Gen. vi. 11, 12.

Christian application. The Psalm teaches us that God takes note of all things, even of "idle words."

1. *The fool.* The man who has cast off God, and who, though he claim wisdom and understanding, is really a simpleton. Cp. Isa. xxxii. 6,

3. After this verse the P. B. V., following the Latin, inserts three verses (5, 6, 7), the eighth verse of the P. B. corresponding to the fourth in the Bible.¹ St. Paul quotes freely (Rom. iii. 10, etc.) the first three verses of this Psalm, and then brings together several passages from other parts of the O. T.

4. *As they eat bread, i.e.* with the same indifference. Mic. iii. 1-3.

5. *Generation of the righteous.* In the worst of times God always has some witnesses. Cp. 1 Kings xix. 18.

7. *The captivity.* Implies perhaps either that the Psalm was not composed by David, but in the times of the captivity, or that some later hand (as Jeremiah's) added this last verse. But the expression is used of any release from misfortune. Job xlii. 10.

¹ The same three verses are also found in this place in some MSS. of the LXX.

NOTE.—*It will be noticed that the "structure" paragraph is dropped; but students will find it helpful to make out the structure of each Psalm for themselves.*

LESSON III.

THIRD DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XV.

Historical occasion. The removal of the Ark to Zion. 2 Sam. vi. 12-19; 1 Chron. xv. 16. The Psalm describes the righteous man positively, 2-4, what he is; and negatively, 4-5, what he is not. Cp. Isa. xxxiii. 14-16, and Ep. of St. James.

Christian application. As we read we think of our Lord gone up on high and dwelling in heaven. It is a proper Psalm for Ascension Day.

1. *Tabernacle;—Holy Hill.* As there could be no literal dwelling in these, the words reach forward to New Testament times, and have a spiritual meaning, anticipating John iv. 21-24.

PSALM XVI.

Historical occasion. Doubtful; but the Psalm expresses the feelings of one who is trying to be a witness for God in the midst of the heathen or unbelievers.

Christian application. Very important, for St. Peter tells us (Acts ii. 30, 31) that David wrote the Psalm as a prophet, and was conscious that he was speaking in the person of that Messiah Whom God had promised.

2. *My goodness extendeth not to Thee.* Either (1) as P. B. V. God is in no need of the goodness, or goods, of the singer; or (2) all the good the singer has comes from God.

5. *Mine inheritance.* An allusion probably to division of land by Joshua. But it is true spiritually of each servant of God.

6. *The lines.* Allusion to ancient custom of marking out property by lines. Cp. Mic. ii. 5.

7. *My reins.* My heart.

9. *My glory.* My soul. The heart, soul and flesh make up the whole man.

10. *Hell.* The unseen place, Hades.

11. *The path of life.* A joyous anticipation of the future life, and of full union with God; the strongest expression of a belief in immortality before the time of Isaiah.

PSALM XVII.

Historical occasion. When David was persecuted by Saul. Cp. 1 Sam. xxiii.

Christian application. The Psalm may be used as the expression of trust in God, in time of danger.

8. *The apple of the eye.* The pupil of the eye, which is set in the iris, and protected by eyelashes and eyebrows. Cp. Deut. xxxii. 10; Zech. ii. 8.

14. Cp. Luke xvi. 8, 25. The portion of the wicked passes away.

15. The portion of the righteous abides. This verse and Ps. xvi. 11 show that David believed in the future life, though it was not an article of the national faith.

THIRD DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XVIII.

Historical occasion. Composed by David towards the close of his life. See 2 Sam. xxii., which contains another edition of this Psalm.

Christian application. From the quotation made by St. Paul of ver. 49, in Rom. xv. 9, we may understand this Psalm as prophetic of the work of our Lord, His sufferings, and His triumph.

2. The expressions, "My rock," etc., in this verse recall the martial character of David's past life. They show all that God has been to him.

6. *His temple.* Heaven.

7. God answers His servants' prayer; there is (1) the earthquake (ver. 7); (2) the gathering storm, the lightning (ver. 8), clouds (ver. 9), the gale of wind (ver. 10); (3) The storm bursts forth, hail, thunder, lightning (vv. 11-14).

28. *My candle.* Or lamp, emblem of life and prosperity.

35. God gave David swiftness of foot (vv. 33, 36, 37), and great strength (34, 38), but his true defence and shield is God Himself (35, 39), Who has stooped to help him. "Thy gentleness (or, meekness) hath made me great."

49. *Among the heathen.* Prophetic (Rom. xv. 9) of Christ's work among the Gentiles, as well as the Jews.

FOURTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XIX.

Historical occasion. Uncertain; the Psalm pictures the feelings and thoughts of one watching a gorgeous Eastern sunrise. The Psalmist thinks, 1-6, of God's glory as witnessed by the heavens, continuously (ver. 2), silently (ver. 3), universally (ver. 4), and especially by the sun (vv. 5, 6). and then, 7-14, of God's glory, as witnessed by His revelation of Himself to man in the Law of Moses.

Christian application. Following St. Paul (Acts xiv. 17; Rom. i. 20), the Church uses this Psalm on Christmas Day, as prophetic of the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, Jesus Christ, when the glory of God so wonderfully shown, and the Angels sang of it.

3. *Where.* The marginal rendering is better. The meaning is, that though the heavenly bodies have no human speech or words with which to inculcate their lessons, yet that they do speak with an intelligible, though inaudible voice, to the pious heart.

4. *Their line.* The measuring line (cp. Isa. xxxiv. 17; Job xxxviii. 5; Jer. xxxi. 39), and hence rule, decree, law (as in Isa. xxviii. 10), which seems to be the meaning here. The P. B. V. "sound" follows the LXX. and Latin Versions. It gives a good sense, but is not according to the Hebrew.

7-11. Describe the glorious effect of God's Word on the heart (cp. 2 Tim. iii. 15). It not only reveals God to the soul, but acts as "a mirror of self-knowledge," by which a man may learn to know himself, and

12-14. Become conscious of sin. Thus the silent teaching of the heavenly bodies, imparting lessons to all the world (ver. 4), is paralleled by the silent teaching of God's Word or Law in the heart of the believer. See St. Paul's use of the fourth verse, Rom. x. 18.

13. *Presumptuous sins.* Deliberate, wilful sin against knowledge.

PSALM XX.

Historical occasion. Perhaps that of the Syro-Ammonitish war (2 Sam. x—xii.). It was intended for use in the Temple worship. The Psalm is dramatic. 1-5. The people, led perhaps by the Levites, sing a Litany for the King, who is offering sacrifices; 6-8. A solo voice, perhaps that of the King himself, declares the offering has been accepted, and exhorts to trust in God; 9. The whole congregation again sing in chorus.

Christian application. Prophetic of Christ in His

office as King of His people. The Church, pleading His sacrifice, may use this Psalm.

5. *Thy salvation.* Not God's, but that wrought by the King for his people, by his success in war. In Ps. xxi. 1 it is the salvation wrought by God.

6. *His anointed.* (1) The King, (2) Jesus Christ.

9. The P. B. V. is better, though perhaps the best rendering would be

"O Lord, save the king.

Answer us, when we cry (unto Thee)."

PSALM XXI.

Historical occasion. Not improbably the success in war granted to the prayer of the last Psalm. Intended for Temple worship.

Christian application. Prophetic of Christ's victory and triumph over all His enemies, and therefore most appropriately appointed for use on Ascension Day.

1. *The King.* The older Jewish commentators understood the King Messiah.

3. *Thou preventest.* Old English word for "going before." *A crown of pure gold.* Reference perhaps to the splendid crown, set with precious stones, of the Ammonite king, which was set on David's head (2 Sam. xii. 30).

4. *For ever and ever.* Most true of Jesus Christ, but yet an expression often used to earthly kings. See 1 Kings i. 31; Dan. iii. 9, etc.

9. *A fiery oven.* Probably means as if they were in an oven, and so utterly consumed.

FOURTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XXII.

Historical occasion. Doubtful; but the Psalm is by David's, written at a time of affliction.

Christian application. This Psalm is very precious to the Christian, because of the use made of it by our Lord on the Cross, and because of its most exact prophetic description of His sufferings there. It is most rightly appointed for use on Good Friday.

1. See Matt. xxvii. 46; Mark xv. 34.

6. Cp. Isa. lii. 14, liii. 3.

7, 8. *The scorn of the spectators.* Matt. xxvii. 39, 40; Mark xv. 29-43; Luke xxiii. 35.

12. *Bashan.* The fertile land of Og, celebrated for its cattle, on the east of Jordan (Deut. xxxii. 14; Amos iv. 1). These animals, bulls, lions (13, 21), dogs (16, 20), unicorns (21), represent by their strength and fierceness the malevolence and hatred of the Psalmist's enemies, and so the scorn and bitterness with which the Scribes and Pharisees hurled reproaches and insults on Jesus Christ.

15. *My tongue cleaveth to my jaws.* Intense thirst. Cp. Ps. lxix. 21; John xix. 28.

18. *They part my garments.* See Matt. xxvii. 35, etc.

20. *My darling.* Literally, My only one, that which I hold most dear, and hence my life. Cp. Ps. xxxv. 17.

21. *Thou hast heard, etc. i.e.* Thou hast delivered me from them. *Unicorns*, probably buffaloes.

22. Messiah is here calling those whom He has redeemed His brethren. See Heb. ii. 11, 12.

26. Refers to the thankful eating of the peace-offering. Lev. vii. 15.

They that be fat, i.e. rich and powerful. Isa. xxv. 6.

PSALM XXIII.

Historical occasion. Probably some event in David's life as a shepherd boy, but some would refer it to the later part of his life (v. 4). Cp. Gen. xlix. 24; Ps. lxxx. 1.

Christian application. The Psalm reminds us of our Lord's description of Himself as the Good Shepherd (John x. 1-16), and of His charge to St. Peter (John xxi. 15-17; cp. Heb. xiii. 20; 1 Pet. ii. 25, v. 4).

2. *He leadeth me.* The Eastern shepherds lead, and do not drive their sheep.

3. *Paths of righteousness.* Straight, level paths.

4. *The valley of the shadow of death.* Literally, the deep valleys of the Holy Land, through which the shepherd has sometimes to lead his sheep, are full of danger from wild beasts, etc. Spiritually we see here the fearlessness with which the Christian can face the frequent "perils of death" in which he is placed, and still more, death itself.

5. *Thou preparest a table.* Spiritually, as most of the old writers teach, the means of grace, especially the Sacraments, which God gives us through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Enemies.* A reminiscence of past trials. So the Christian may say of his spiritual foes.

FIFTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XXIV.

Historical occasion. The bringing up the Ark from Kirjath-jearim, where it had lain neglected for fully half a century, to Jerusalem, the recently captured stronghold of the Jebusites, and now the capital city of Israel. It was a day of intense rejoicing to David and his people (1 Chron. xv. xvi.).

Christian application. The Psalm is prophetic of our Lord's ascension into Heaven, and is therefore appointed as a proper Psalm for Ascension Day.

The Psalm is dramatic.

1, 2. Sung in chorus by the procession of Priests, Levites, and people accompanying the Ark.

3. A single voice, or perhaps half the chorus.
4. Another voice, or the other half of the chorus.
- 5-7. Full chorus.
8. Chorus of people within the city gates.
- 8, 9. Full chorus as before.
10. The voices within the city, and then one grand chorus as the procession enters.

PSALM XXV. (An Alphabetical Psalm.)

Historical occasion. Some time of distress and weakness. The last verse was probably added by a later hand, to fit the Psalm for use in the Temple worship.

Christian application. The Church, or any one of her members, prays for deliverance from spiritual enemies, for mercy, and spiritual guidance.

14. *The secret of the Lord.* Implies confidential intercourse, such as Abraham's. See Gen. xviii. 17.

PSALM XXVI.

Historical occasion. Perhaps Absalom's rebellion. The Psalmist asserts his uprightness, and prays for help and mercy.

Christian application. The Psalm may be used as an acknowledgment of God's mercy in enabling any to walk in integrity. "By the grace of God I am what I am," says St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 10).

1. *Integrity.* Uprightness of heart, a good conscience.

6. *I will wash my hands, etc.* Cp. Deut. xxi. 6; Matt. xxvii. 24. For Christian application see 1 Cor. xi. 28.

FIFTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XXVII.

Historical occasion. Perhaps (as the last) Absa-

lom's rebellion; or according to some ancient versions, just before David was anointed king of Israel and Judah at Hebron (2 Sam. v. 3).

Christian application. The Christian may use the Psalm as an expression of confidence in God, and a prayer for guidance and patience.

4. *The beauty of the Lord.* With reference probably to (1) the services of the Sanctuary, (2) to the spiritual insight of faith.

Temple. The Tabernacle which David had pitched for the Ark in Zion (see ver. 5 and 2 Sam. vi. 17). So *pavilion* in ver. 5.

5. *He shall hide me.* The Tabernacle enshrining the Ark was the symbol to David, as God's House and Church are to the Christian, of God's presence and protecting care.

8. *My heart said, etc.* The P. B. V. conveys better the order of the words. David seems to hear God speaking to him.

13. *I had fainted.* Not in Hebrew, but necessary to give the sense, which it does well.

14. *He shall strengthen, etc.* Rather, let thy heart be strong.

PSALM XXVIII.

Historical occasion. The same probably as that of the preceding.

Christian application. To the Christian it is a prayer for guidance, and towards its close a hymn of praise and trustfulness.

2. *Thy holy oracle.* The Holy of Holies. The word only occurs here, and in the Books of Kings and Chronicles. See 1 Kings vi. 5, 19-22; 2 Chron. iii. etc.

9. *Feed them.* Again the idea of God as the Shepherd of His people. Cp. Isa. xl. 11.

PSALM XXIX.

Historical occasion. A great thunderstorm, sweeping over Palestine from Lebanon on the north to Kadesh on the south. The thunder is the Voice of Jehovah, crashing amidst the lofty cedars of Lebanon, and the rocks and valleys of the southern land.

Christian application. To the Christian the Psalm expresses the great work of the Word of God over the hearts of men.

1. *O ye mighty.* Literally, Ye sons of God, *i.e.* the angels. The "young rams" of P. B. V. is wrong.

2. *The beauty of holiness.* Rather, "Holy garments." The angels are supposed to be clothed in priestly vestments, even as the Priests and Levites were arrayed on earth. Cp. 2 Chron. xx. 21.

6. *Sirion.* Anti-Lebanon, or Hermon. Deut. iii. 9. *Skip.* Tremble, shake.

7. *Divideth.* Descriptive of forked lightning.

8. *Kadesh.* In extreme south of Palestine.

9. *Maketh the hinds to calve.* Their being frightened by the storm causes the hinds to drop their young prematurely. A fact noted by Eastern writers.

Discovereth. Lays bare the branches by stripping them of their foliage.

10. *The flood.* The rain has come down in such torrents that the Psalmist is reminded, when he sees the effects, of the Deluge. This is the only passage where the word used in Genesis to describe the Deluge occurs elsewhere.

LESSON IV.

SIXTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XXX.

Historical occasion. Recovery from a sickness, which had probably delayed David in the dedication of his house. See Inscription; 2 Sam. v. 11. The house may however well mean the Tabernacle which David pitched for the Ark.¹ 2 Sam. vi. 17.

Christian application. May be fitly used in all times of sickness and trial, and of deliverance.

9-10. The words of David's prayer. Cp. Hezekiah's prayer, Isa. xxxviii. "In the Old Testament, Hades was as yet unvanquished, Heaven was not yet opened."²

12. *My glory.* My soul.

PSALM XXXI.

Historical occasion. Probably David's flight from Saul to the wilderness of Maon. 1 Sam. xxiii. 24-26. He recounts his sufferings, and prays for grace and mercy.

Christian application. He who is in trouble may commit himself into God's hands, in the words of this Psalm, even as our Lord did (Luke xxiii. 46).

1-3. Cp. Ps. lxxi. 1-3.

5. *Into Thy hands, etc.* A faithful placing of himself by David in God's hands. But our Lord's use of these

¹ See Manual II., p. 71.

² Delitach.

words has given them a higher meaning. In His mouth they are the expression of the free will with which He gave up His life.

13. Quoted by Jer. xx. 10.

15. *My times.* The vicissitudes and changes of my life are all in Thy keeping. Cp. 1 Chron. xxix. 30.

19. *Laid up.* Cp. Prov. ii. 7, and "the hidden manna" of Rev. ii. 17; see also Ps. xvii. 14.

20. *In the secret of Thy presence, i.e.* in Thine own habitation, which is hidden from the eyes of men. A very striking expression, as if the brightest place gave the most entire safety. And so it really is. Cp. Exod. xiv. 20. Man fears not man's frown when he has the sense of God's secret approval in his heart, and feels Him near.

21. *In a strong city.* Fenced city. Perhaps Ziklag. Or it may be simply a metaphor for a place of safety.

SIXTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XXXII.

Historical occasion. The Psalm connects itself with David's repentance after his great sin (2 Sam. xii. 1-13). With the record (vv. 1-7) of the blessedness of confession made and forgiveness obtained, we may compare Prov. xxviii. 13; Rom. iv. 8; 1 John i. 8, 9. It is the second of the Penitential Psalms.

Christian application. An ancient version calls this Psalm "a prophecy of Christ by Whom we are delivered from the pains of hell." St. Paul also uses it (Rom. iv. 6-9) to show that God pardons freely, upon true faith and repentance. A proper Psalm for Ash-Wednesday.

2. *In whose spirit there is no guile.* Cp. John i. 47; Rev. xiv. 5. There is no true penitence where there is reservation in confession.

3, 4. Describe the workings of David's conscience during the year that he kept silence about his sin.

5. See 2 Sam. xii. 13.

PSALM XXXIII.

Historical occasion. Uncertain, but perhaps, as some think, written as a continuation of Ps. xxxii. It is an exhortation to praise God, and that for three reasons; (1) Because He is the Creator of all things; (2) Because He governs all things; (3) Because He watches over and protects His servants.

Christian application. A hymn of rejoicing for the mercies of Redemption.

6. Cp. Heb. xi. 3; 2 Pet. iii. 5.

7. *He gathereth the waters.* Cp. Gen. i. 6-10; Ex. xv. 8; Josh. iii. 13, 16.

9. Gen. i. 3.

15. God, as their Creator, knoweth men's hearts. John ii. 25.

PSALM XXXIV. (An Alphabetical Psalm.)

Historical occasion. If the inscription is correct, the occasion is to be found in 1 Sam. xxi. 13.¹

Christian application. To celebrate Christ's victory over, and our own deliverance through Him from, our spiritual enemies. It is a sweet Psalm of trustful love, always full of freshness, never out of date.

6. *This poor man.* The Psalmist himself.

¹ Abimelech was the official title, Achish the personal name. This shows that the writer of the inscription obtained his information from some source other than 1 Sam. xxi.

7. *The angel of the Lord.* Here an angel of mercy; in Ps. xxxv. 5 of judgment. *Encampeth.* Cp. Gen. xxxii. 1; 2 Kings vi. 17.

8. *O taste and see.* 1 Pet. ii. 3.

12-16. Quoted by St. Peter (1 Ep. iii. 10-12) as the rule of the Christian, imitating the patience of his Divine Lord.

SEVENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XXXV.

Historical occasion. Perhaps Saul's persecution of David (see especially 1 Sam. xxiv. 15, compared with ver. 1 of Psalm); or Absalom's rebellion.

Christian application. Our Lord shows (John xv. 25) that the Psalm is prophetic of Himself. In this Psalm however, as in many others, we must beware of supposing that every verse applies to Jesus Christ because some of the verses undoubtedly do so. In this Psalm, such verses as 4-8 must be regarded as judicial, "designed to deter men from presuming on God's mercy, and forgetting His judgments."¹

7. *Their net in a pit.* Wild animals were caught in nets concealed in pits, which were covered lightly with sticks, grass, etc.

17. *My darling.* Ps. xxii. 20, where see note.

21. Compare Mark xv. 29.

PSALM XXXVI.

Historical occasion. Quite doubtful.

Christian application. May be used as prophetic of the blessings we enjoy through Christ (ver. 9), and of His victories.

¹ Wordsworth.

1. The P. B. V. is here the plainer. But it would be better if rendered, "The wicked hath an utterance of sin in his heart," sin being represented as a person within him, addressing the man, and suggesting evil to him.

6. *The great (or, strong, P. B. V.) mountains.* Literally, the mountains of God. So of the cedars (Ps. lxxx. 10); cp. also Ps. lxxv. 10; Gen. xiii. 10.

8, 9. *The fountain of life.* Cp. John iv. 14, vii. 37, 38; Rev. vii. 17, which passages are anticipated in these far-reaching words of the Psalmist. Cp. also Dan. ii. 22; 1 John i. 5, 7.

SEVENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XXXVIL (An Alphabetical Psalm.)

Historical occasion. Written probably in David's old age, and giving a summary of his experience. Its words (ver. 16) are re-echoed in such passages as Prov. xv. 16, xvi. 8.

Christian application. The Psalm teaches us to leave things in God's hands. His ways may be mysterious to us, but present discomfort and anxiety for the future are alike to give way to trust and rest in Jehovah.

7. P. B. V. very good here,—“Hold thee still in the Lord;” *i.e.* Be patient and tranquil in God's hands.

8. *Fret not thyself in any wise to do evil.* Rather, only to do evil. The result of fretting would be that thou wouldest do evil thyself, whereas God says “Avenge not thyself.” Heb. x. 30; Rom. xii. 19; Deut. xxxii. 35.

11. See also ver. 29, and cp. Matt. v. 5. Cp. also vv. 25 and 29 of this Psalm and Matt. xix. 28, 29.

20. *The fat of lambs.* Literally, the glory of lambs; *i.e.* the fine rich grass and flowers of the pastures. Cp. Isa. xxx. 23; Ps. lxxv. 13, where the same word occurs in the sense of *pastures* which is here rendered *lambs*.

35. *A green bay tree.* Rather, "a green tree deeply rooted," in its native soil, no mere exotic.

37. The A. V. of this verse is preferable to the P. B. V. (ver. 38), which however follows some of the old versions.

EIGHTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XXXVIII.

Historical occasion. Another probably of the Psalms of David's old age; its words point to such circumstances as his own bodily weakness, and the rebellion of Adonijah, Abiathar, and Joab.¹

Christian application. As a penitential Psalm, appointed for Ash-Wednesday, it expresses the sense of sin oppressing the heart. It is prophetic also of Christ's sufferings (ver. 11; cp. Luke xxiii. 49).

7. *Loathsome disease.* Rather, burning; a symptom of fever.

8. *I am feeble.* Cp. 1 Kings i. 1-4.

9. He turns to the true source of comfort.

13, 14. These words were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Cp. Isa. liii. 7; 1 Pet. ii. 23.

17. *I am ready to halt, i.e.* I am in constant danger of falling, and of ruin. Cp. Job xii. 5. The P. B. V., following LXX. and Latin, has "I am set in the plague,"—"plague" meaning a stroke of affliction.

PSALM XXXIX.

Historical occasion. Another of the Psalms probably

¹ 1 Kings i. 7; cp. ver. 11 of the Psalm.

of David's old age, and composed on same occasion as the preceding. Jeduthun, to whom it is inscribed, was one of David's three choir-masters,¹ and is called the King's Seer.²

Christian application. As a homily on the shortness and sinfulness of life, with its expressed hope in God, a Christian may use it as his own. It is fitly appointed for use in the Burial Service.

2. *Even from good.* Meaning obscure; probably P. B. is right,—“even from good words.”

7. *My hope is in Thee.* In these words are to be found the only solution of the many mysteries and problems of life.

12. *A stranger—a sojourner.* So said Abraham (Gen. xxiii. 4), and so St. Peter (1 Ep. ii. 11), and the Ep. to the Hebrews (xi. 13). Cp. David's own words in 1 Chron. xxix. 15.

13. *That I may recover strength.* Literally, “that I may brighten up again,” “have a cheerful countenance.” Cp. Job x. 20, 21.³

PSALM XL.

Historical occasion. Another Psalm of David's old age; written probably in a time of peace following upon the sickness and distress in which Psalms xxxviii. and xxxix. were written.

Christian application. To our Blessed Lord and

¹ 1 Chron. xvi. 41, xxv. 1; 2 Chron. v. 12. Probably the same as Ethan, 1 Chron. xv. 17-19.

² 2 Chron. xxxv. 15.

³ This Psalm suggests that the Book of Job was well known to David, and had entered into his thoughts and feelings. See Job vii. 8, ix. 27, xiii. 28. So in Ps. xix. 4, the word rendered “words” is only found Job (several times), and in three other places.

His atoning sufferings, as shown in Epistle to Hebrews (x. 5-10). Hence appointed as a proper Psalm for Good Friday.

6. *Sacrifice.* Of slain beasts ; *offerings*, of fine flour, etc. David enunciates the truth here that outward observances are of no avail without a surrender of our wills to God's will. So Samuel (1 Sam. xv. 22) had said before, and so the Prophets (Isa. i. 11-17 ; Hos. vi. 6 ; Mic. vi. 6-8) said afterwards.

Mine ears hast Thou opened: or pierced, (cp. Ps. xxii. 16). Literally, "Mine ears hast Thou dug," with the meaning probably, "Thou hast revealed this truth to me," viz., that obedience is better than sacrifice. Others understand the words to mean "Thou hast made me obedient," comparing Isa. l. 5, where, however, the Hebrew word for "opened" is not the same as here. So the LXX. (unless we suppose a mis-reading here) render "A body hast Thou prepared me," i.e. Thou hast endowed me with a body fitted to be obedient. Cp. Heb. x. 5, where the LXX. version is quoted, in illustration of our Lord's perfect obedience. Others again (Mede, Pearson), with the thought of the obedience rendered being a willing service, see a reference to boring the ear of a slave (Exod. xxi. 6 ; Deut. xv. 17). But this is not likely, the Hebrew verbs being quite different.

7. *In the volume of the book.* Most probably the Pentateuch generally is meant, with especial reference perhaps to the duties of a king in Deut. xvii. 18, 19.

8. *Within my heart.* Jer. xxxi. 33 ; Isa. li. 7 ; 2 Cor. iii. 3.

13, to the end. Found (with variations) again, as Ps. lxx. Cp. also Ps. xxxv.

EIGHTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XLI.

Historical occasion. Either when David heard of Ahithophel having joined Absalom,¹ in which case Ahithophel is certainly referred to in ver. 9; or when, in his old age, Adonijah and others rebelled against him. The former seems the more probable supposition. The Psalm ends with a doxology, which closes Book I. of the Psalms.

Christian application. By quoting ver. 9 of Judas,² our Lord has stamped this Psalm as Messianic.

8. *An evil disease, etc.* P. B. V. is, "Let the sentence of guiltiness proceed against him." Literally, "a thing of Belial." Meaning obscure, but probably it is a taunt of his enemies, describing the punishment of some sin David had committed.

9. Literally true of Absalom and Ahithophel,³ of Adonijah, Abiathar and Joab, as well as of Judas Iscariot.

13. This verse was perhaps no part of the original Psalm, but added afterwards as a completion of the First Book. Cp. 1 Chron. xvi. 36.

PSALM XLII. [Commences Second Book of the Psalter, xlii—lxxii.]

Historical occasion. Absalom's rebellion. The Psalm is one of the twelve ascribed to the sons (or descendants) of Korah, whose children did not all share

¹ 2 Sam. xv. 31.

² John xiii. 18; but He leaves out "in whom I trusted."

³ If Ahithophel was grandfather of Bathsheba, we have a possible cause of his treachery. See 2 Sam. xxiii. 34, 39, xi. 3; and Blunt's *Undesigned Coincidences*, p. 143.

their father's punishment.² These Korahites were distinguished for a long time as musicians and singers.³ They were also keepers of the threshold of the Tabernacle,³ and appear to have been warlike men as well.⁴ The one of them who wrote this Psalm may well have been an intimate friend of David, and one of his companions in exile. David's spirit breathes forth in the Psalm, which is one of special beauty.

Christian application. The Psalm may be used as foreshadowing the sufferings of Christ, and as expressing the yearning of the Christian's heart after the presence of God.

1. *Panteth.* The word only occurs here and in Joel i. 20.

2. *Appear before God.* The usual phrase for going up to the Sanctuary at Jerusalem. Exod. xxiii. 17; Ps. lxxiv. 7.

4. *With the voice of joy and praise, etc.* The feelings of the pilgrims attending the three great festivals at Jerusalem, stimulated by music and song,⁵ broke out in a shout of religious ardour and enthusiasm. Cp. our Lord's entry into Jerusalem, Matt. xxi. 9.

5, 6. *My soul is cast down.* The LXX. version of ver. 5 is applied by our Lord to Himself in Matt. xxvi. 38, and of ver. 6, in John xii. 27.

6. *The land of Jordan.* The country east of the river.

The Hermonites. The peaks (two, or three, travellers seem to differ as to the number) of Hermon, or the range itself.

The hill Mizar. Or, the little hill. Perhaps one of the lower eminences of Hermon, bearing this name.

² Numb. xxvi. 10, 11,

³ 1 Chron. vi. ; 2 Chron. xx. 19.

³ 1 Chron. ix. 19.

⁴ 1 Chron. xii. 6. ⁵ 2 Sam. vi. 5.

7. *Deep calleth unto deep.* "The confused noise of deep waters in motion." *Waterspouts* (P. B. V. water-pipes). Canals or channels for water (gutters, 2 Sam. v. 8). The Psalmist represents himself as overwhelmed by the whirling waters, as, swollen by some sudden and great storm, they toss and foam along the ravine or torrent-bed. It is the expression of intense spiritual depression. Cp: Jonah ii. 3.

PSALM XLIII.

A manifest continuation of the preceding. In many MSS. they are written as one Psalm.

3. *Thy Light and Thy Truth.* An allusion perhaps to the Urim and Thummim (Light and Perfection). See Exod. xxviii. 30.

LESSON V.

NINTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XLIV.

Historical occasion. Doubtful; but by comparing together Ps. lx. (which resembles this one), and especially the inscription, which records an event not elsewhere spoken of, 2 Sam. viii. 13, 14; 1 Kings xi. 15, 16; 1 Chron. xviii. 11, 12, it seems probable that it was written during David's war with the Syrians, when the Edomites took advantage of his absence to harass and distress Israel.

Christian application. "This Psalm excites the faithful to fight the good fight for Christ, and reminds them that no one is crowned except he strive lawfully (2 Tim. ii. 5); and in it we hear the voice of the holy martyrs."* Cp. Rom. viii. 36.

1. *Our fathers have told us.* See Exod. x. 2; Deut. vi. 20-25, etc.

2. *The people.* The nations of Canaan.

Cast them out. Rather, "didst spread them (the Israelites) abroad." The contrast in both sections of the verse is between the nations who were driven out, and the Israelites who were planted and spread abroad. Cp. Exod. xv. 17; Ps. lxxx. 8.

5. *Push down.* As cattle with their horns. Deut. xxxiii. 17.

* St. Jerome, quoted by Wordsworth.

14. *A byword.* Cp. the Amorite proverb, Numb. xxi. 27.

17. *Yet have we not forgotten Thee.* Remarkable words, well applicable to a time of high religious enthusiasm, as was the earlier part of David's reign.

19. *Dragons, i.e. jackals.* A dreary, waste place. See Jer. ix. 11, x. 22.

22. *For Thy sake, etc.* Quoted by St. Paul (Rom. viii. 36). But while the Psalmist is sorrowful, St. Paul rejoices, and sees victory as the end of all bravely-borne sorrows and trials, "through Him that loved us." Cp. Rev. vi. 9, 10.

PSALM XLV.

Historical occasion. Perhaps the marriage of Solomon, or some other king of Judah, with a princess; but many of the words and expressions are entirely unsuited to any earthly monarch. The Psalm contains, 1-9. Description of the superhuman beauty and excellence of the Bridegroom; 10-15. Description of the Bride; 16, 17. Assurance that the children shall perpetuate the glory and majesty of their Father.

Christian application. The Psalm is really and truly Messianic, directly prophetic of Jesus Christ. The Epistle to the Hebrews teaches us this (i. 8, 9). It depicts the mystical marriage betwixt Christ and His Church. The children (ver. 16) of this marriage are the believers in Jesus Christ, the members of His Church, the spiritual seed (Isa. lii. 10), who show forth their Father's praises (1 Pet. ii. 9). Very suitably appointed for Christmas Day.

2. *Fairer than the children of men.* Cp. Isa. lii. 14, liii. 2. The King Messiah has more than one aspect; He is both a suffering and a Messiah.

6. *Thy throne, O God.* Testimony to the Divinity of Jesus Christ. Heb. i. 8.

8. *Ivory palaces.* Cp. 1 Kings x. 18, xxii. 39.

9. *Gold of Ophir.* Well known in David's time. 1 Chron. xxix. 4.

10. *O daughter, i.e. the Queen;* spiritually prophetic of the Church, who is to "forget her own people," etc., by which we may understand the Old Adam of St. Paul.

3. *Within.* In the interior of the palace.

16. *Instead of thy fathers.* Addressed to the King. Spiritually the Old Dispensation.

Princes. Christ's disciples are a "royal priesthood." 1 Pet. ii. 9; Rev. i. 6.

PSALM XLVI.

Historical occasion. Either Jehoshaphat's victory over Ammon, Moab and Edom, recorded in 2 Chron. xx., or the victory over Sennacherib in Isaiah's time. The similarity of expression (*e.g.* Isa. ii. 4, xxxiii. 2) seems to favour this latter view.

Christian application. It is the Church's song of triumph over her spiritual foes.

4. *There is a river.* Sennacherib threatened death by thirst to the people of Jerusalem (2 Chron. xxxii. 11). Hezekiah cut off the water supply from the enemy (2 Chron. xxxii. 3, 4), but took care to provide an excellent one for the city (2 Kings xx. 20; 2 Chron. xxxii. 30). But the true river is Jesus Christ, Who makes glad His servants with streams of Divine grace.¹

5. *Right early.* Literally, "at the dawning of the morning." Cp. 2 Kings xix. 35.

¹ John iv. 14, vii. 38; Rev. xxii. 1.

NINTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XLVII.

Historical occasion. Either the same as the preceding, or, as some think, the bringing up of the Ark to Mount Zion.¹ At any rate it is a Psalm of national thanksgiving.

Christian application. As a Psalm of victory it is most appropriately appointed for Ascension Day.

4. *The excellency of Jacob.* The Holy Land. Cp. Amos vi. 8.

5. *God is gone up.* Words literally fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Cp. Ps. lxviii. 18; Eph. iv. 8-10.

9. *The shields of the earth.* The princes and rulers. Cp. Hos. iv. 18 (text and margin).

PSALM XLVIII.

Historical occasion. Same probably as Ps. xlv. ; but verses 4-9 seem to point to the time of Jehoshaphat.²

Christian application. As the Israelite rejoiced in God's deliverance, and the grandeur and beauty of Zion, so the Christian may use these words of the spiritual Zion, and of the deliverance from sin wrought by Jesus Christ.

2. *The sides of the north.* This obscure expression seems to refer to the situation of the Temple, which lay north or north-east of Zion.

The great King. God.

7. *The ships of Tarshish.* This reference to Tarshish seems to fix the date of the Psalm to Jehoshaphat's time.³

¹ Verses 4 and 5 seem to favour this last.

² See also 1 Kings xxii. 48; 2 Chron. xx. esp. vv. 5-19 and 37.

PSALM XLIX.

Historical occasion. Doubtful ; but, from its structure and thought, probably as late as Hezekiah's time.

Christian application. As justifying the ways of God to man it is an Old Testament anticipation of such parables as that of the rich man and Lazarus. In vv. 7, 8, it points to the redemption of man by Jesus Christ.

1. *The world.* The people of the present age or time.

2. *Low and high.* Literally, "sons of Adam and sons of Ish," i.e. people of all classes, "simple and gentle."

4. *My dark saying.* Words of deep and mysterious meaning. This verse was fulfilled in our Lord's teaching by parables. Matt. xiii. 35.

5. *Days of evil.* Of calamity, or perhaps old age, as in Eccles. xii. 1.

The iniquity of my heels. An obscure expression. Most probable meaning is, Iniquity, in the persons of the Psalmist's enemies (whether bodily or spiritual), lies in wait for him, if possible to trip him up. Cp. Gen. xlix. 17 and Ps. lvi. 6, where "steps" is literally "heels."

8. *It ceaseth.* The P. B. V. is a good paraphrase—"so that he must let that alone."

11. *After their own names.* Cp. Gen. iv. 17.

14. *Death shall feed on them.* Rather, Death shall be their shepherd, Hades being their sheepfold.

15. *God will redeem my soul.* Cp. Hos. xiii. 14 ; 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55.

18. *He blessed his soul.* So the rich fool, Luke xii.

19. Cp. Deut. xxix. 19.

TENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM L.

Historical occasion. The first of twelve Psalms ascribed to Asaph, one of David's three chief choir-masters.¹ It is no doubt of his date. Asaph was held in high repute as a Psalmist. 2 Chron. xxix. 30; Neh. xii. 46. The Psalm contains, 1-6, a call from God to hear the true explanation of the Law; teaches, 7-15, the spiritual meaning of all sacrifices taught to the righteous; and, 16-23, warns the wicked that his sacrifices are profane and useless.

Christian application. In its central thought, re-echoed from Samuel,² of the greater excellence of the "right ordering of the conversation;" as compared with sacrifice, it is an anticipation of the Gospel. Cp. Mic. vi. 6-8.

2. *The perfection of beauty.* Mount Zion. Cp. Lam. ii. 15.

14. *Offer unto God thanksgiving.* This, with prayer, sums up all true religion. Heb. xiii. 15.

PSALM LL.

Historical occasion. This Psalm is the outpouring of David's heart, when he repented of his great sin, of which the particulars are given in 2 Sam. xi, xii. Ver. 18 contains reference to David's great desire to fortify Jerusalem. He is afraid lest his sin should stay the finishing of the work. See 2 Sam. v. 9; 1 Kings iii. 1; 1 Chron. xi. 8.

Christian application. By appointing it for use in the Communion Service, the Church shows that she

¹ 2 Chron. xv. 16, 17, xxv. 1, 2.

² 1 Sam. xv. 22.

regards this Psalm as expressing the convictions of every true penitent heart.¹

4. *Against Thee only.* Though he had grievously sinned against others, David felt that his chiefest offence was against God, Whose Law he had outraged. See 2 Sam. xii. 13.

That Thou mightest be justified. St. Paul quotes this passage (Rom. iii. 4), using it to prove that man's sin brings out into greater contrast God's holiness.

5. In this verse we have the acknowledgment of original sin. See Article IX.

7. *Hyssope.* Used, under the Law, in many cases of purification.² It is described 1 Kings iv. 33.

Whiter than snow. Cp. Isa. i. 18. The prophet knew this Psalm well.

13. *Then will I teach.* Cp. Luke xxii. 32.

18. In after times, taking up David's words, "Israel after the flesh, lamenting their Jerusalem which is now not theirs, and mourning over their ruined temple, in all their synagogues repeat constantly the prayer, O Lord, build Thou the walls of Jerusalem! O Lord, build! is the solemn chorus, marking by its repetition the earnestness of their desire. And should not this be the prayer of God's spiritual Israel?"—ARNOLD'S *Sermons*.

PSALM LII.

Historical occasion. Described in 1 Sam. xxi. 7;

¹ "This Psalm, written three thousand years ago, might have been written yesterday. It describes the vicissitudes of spiritual life in an Englishman, as truly as in a Jew."—ROBERTSON.

"This Psalm is a perfect model of penitential devotion."—BISHOP HORNE.

² See Exod. xii. 22; Lev. xiv. 4, 51; Numb. xix. 6.

xxii. 9, 18, 19. The character of the Psalm agrees with what we read of Doeg.

Christian application. As David suffered, so Christ suffered, and so His Church suffers at the hands of cruel enemies.

6. *Laugh.* As in next verse, because God's truth is vindicated. Cp. Job xxxi. 29; Prov. xxiv. 17.

8. *A green olive tree.* Type of gladness and joy. Nob¹ was situated, most probably, on the Mount of Olives;² hence the allusion to the olive.

TENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LIII.

A second edition of Ps. xiv., which see. The chief difference between the two is that in Ps. xiv. the name for God is Jehovah, while in this it is Elohim.

5. *Where no fear was.* Not in Ps. xiv. Cp. Job xv. 21; 2 Kings vii. 6, xix. 7.

For God hath scattered, etc. The dead were not buried, but their bones lay scattered about to whiten in the sun. This verse suggests the date of Jehoshaphat or Hezekiah, when it would be literally true. See 2 Chron. xx. 24; 2 Kings xix. 35.

PSALM LIV.

Historical occasion. The circumstances mentioned in the inscription are related in 1 Sam. xxiii. and xxvi.

Christian application. The Psalm has ever been regarded as prophetic of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, and is therefore appointed as a proper Psalm for Good Friday.

¹ See 1 Sam. xxii. 9.

² Compare Isa. x. 28-32; Neh. xi. 32.

3. *Strangers.* Either the Ziphites, or foreigners in Saul's army.

7. *His desire.* Not in the original, though some word must be supplied. The sense is "Mine eye hath looked upon mine enemies calmly," *i.e.* with assurance of victory. Cp. Ps. lix. 10.

PSALM LV.

Historical occasion. With little doubt Absalom's rebellion. Cp. 2 Sam. xv.

Christian application. As David in this Psalm takes refuge in God from his enemies, so the Christian may use it as the expression of his trust in Jesus Christ in the midst of spiritual foes.

2. *I mourn in my complaint.* Or, I wander about restlessly, am harassed with fears.

3. *They cast iniquity.* They are constantly trying to do me some mischief.

4, 5. Cp. Matt. xxvi. 38; Mark xiv. 33; John xii. 27, xiii. 21.

13. This description answers well to Ahithophel.

16. *Quick.* Alive. Cp. Numb. xvi. 30, to which there may be allusion.

19. *No changes.* Alternations of fortune. P. B. V. is wrong.

22. Cp. 1 Pet. v. 7.

LESSON VI.

ELEVENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM LVI.

Historical occasion. The inscription says "when the Philistines took David in Gath," which is not mentioned in the history of the period. But the condition of things, as recorded in 1 Sam. xxi. xxii. xxvii., are quite suggestive of such a circumstance.

Christian application. The Christian may use this Psalm in great part as a prayer against his spiritual foes.

2. *O Thou most high.* Better not a vocative, but an adverb, "proudly," "haughtily," as descriptive of his enemies.

6. *My steps.* Literally, My heels. Cp. Ps. xlix. 5.

8. *My wanderings.* A touching description of David's life at this time.

My tears in Thy bottle. Cp. God's message to Hezekiah, 2 Kings xx. 5, and our Lord's words in Luke xii. 7.

Thy book. Cp. Exod. xxxii. 32; Mal. iii. 16; Phil. iv. 3, etc.

12. *Thy vows.* The vows made to God in time of trouble. Not "*my* vows" as in P. B. V.

PSALM LVII.

Historical occasion. The cave mentioned in the

inscription was either that of Adullam or that of En-gedi.¹

Christian application. David's deliverance was like a resurrection from the dead; and the Psalm is appointed for Easter Day, as prophetic of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1. *The shadow of Thy wings.* Cp. Deut. xxxii. 11; Ruth ii. 12; Matt. xxiii. 37.

4. *Set on fire.* Breathing flame, as it were. Cp. Jas. iii. 6.

8. *I will awake right early.* Better "I will wake the dawn."² See Mark xvi. 9; Luke xxiv. 1.

PSALM LVIII.

Historical occasion. The Psalm reproves unjust judges, and from its stern character is thought to belong to the very early part of David's reign.

Christian application. It may be regarded as a call for punishment upon the enemies of the Gospel.

2. *Ye weigh the violence, etc.* Describes their unrighteous decisions.

4. *The deaf adder.* Snake charming by music was thus known in David's time: the adder being the most difficult to tame in this way was said to be deaf.

9. A very difficult verse. The meaning seems to be that these wicked ones shall be swept away as quickly as the dry sticks or thorns which a blast of wind sweeps away before the fire of them has had time to heat the caldron.

¹ 1 Sam. xxii. 1, xxiv. 1-3; 2 Sam. xxiii. 13.

² Cp. MILTON, *L'Allegro*:

"While the cock with lively din
Scatters the rear of darkness thin."

10. *Wash his feet.* The destruction is wrought by God, not by man.

ELEVENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LIX.

Historical occasion. The character of the Psalm bears out the inscription, which alludes to the circumstances recorded in 1 Sam. xix. 11. It is thus one of David's earliest Psalms.

Christian application. The Psalm is prophetic of the rejection of Christ's enemies, who believe not in Him.

3. *Not for my transgression, etc.* Words only fully applicable to Jesus Christ.

5. *O Lord God of Hosts.* This title of God, very frequent in the Psalms and the Prophets (except Ezekiel and Daniel), is found for the first time in 1 Sam. i. 3.

6. *They return at evening.* To make fresh search.

9. *Because of his strength.* Obscure ; the reading is most likely wrong. Better, with some MSS., regard the Psalmist as addressing God, "O my strength." Cp. ver. 17.

10. *My desire.* See note on Ps. liv. 7.

11. *Slay them not, etc.* If his enemies were to die at once, they would be less of an example than if they should become, as Cain, fugitives and vagabonds. Words fulfilled in the highest sense by the scattering in all lands of the Jews, the enemies of Jesus Christ.

15. *Grudge.* Rather as in margin—"They will stay all night," *i.e.* on the watch.

PSALM LX.

Historical occasion. The circumstances alluded to

in the inscription are recorded in 2 Sam. viii.;¹ 1 Chron. xviii. 12. The Psalm alludes to reverses which are not mentioned in the historical books; but the terrible vengeance which Joab took upon Edom² suggests previous victory and oppression on the part of Edom. Aram-naharaim, *i.e.* Mesopotamia. The "valley of salt," the barren country south of the Dead Sea.

Christian application. The Psalm is prophetic of Christ's victory over the world, Jewish and Gentile.

4. *A banner.* Cp. Exod. xvii. 15, "Jehovah-Nissi;" and the words of reception in the Baptismal Service, "manfully to fight under Christ's banner."

6. *Divide Shechem.* Mete out, measure. Shechem probably stands for the land west of Jordan, and Succoth for that east of the river.

7. This verse represents Israel as one united nation, without tribal jealousies. This condition of things existed only in the reigns of David and Solomon.

8. *Washpot.* Used as a term of contempt. The vessel intended was used for washing the feet. The subjugation of Moab was complete.³

My shoe. In token that Edom is reduced to slavery. Cp. 2 Sam. viii. 14.

Philistia, triumph thou, etc. Perhaps a call to the Philistines to join David's army,⁴ or perhaps it should be, as in the parallel passage, Ps. cviii. 9, "over Philistia will I triumph."

9. *The strong city.* The fortified city, Petra or Rabbath-Ammon.

¹ In 2 Sam. viii. 13 we should read "Edomites" instead of "Syrians."

² 1 Kings xi. 15, 16.

³ 2 Sam. viii. 2.

⁴ The Philistines certainly seem to have acted as allies of David. Cp. 2 Sam. xv. 18.

PSALM LXI.

Historical occasion. Most probably Absalom's rebellion.

Christian application is to Christ, Who, having suffered, "abideth before God for ever."

2. *The rock, etc.* David may have had Zion in his mind; but the ancient Fathers apply the words to Jesus Christ.

4. *Tabernacle.* The Temple was not yet built. The earthly tabernacle is the type to David, as to us, of the heavenly.

In the covert of Thy wings. The thought is of the wings of the Cherubim overshadowing the mercy-seat.

6, 7. Only really true of the King Messiah.

8. Shows David's belief in the future life.

TWELFTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM LXII.

Historical occasion. Probably about the time of Absalom's rebellion, towards the close of David's reign. Cp. Ps. xxxix.

Christian application. The Psalm expresses the Christian's hope and confidence in God.

3. *Against a man.* Cp. Ahithophel's threat, 2 Sam. xvii. 2.

9. *Men of low degree, etc.* See Ps. xlix. 2.

To be laid in the balance, etc. The meaning seems to be, they are as light as air, so that when put in the scale of truth and justice they go up.

PSALM LXIII.

Historical occasion. Very clearly the time of Absa-

lom's rebellion, when David and his people were "hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness."¹ The Psalm describes, 1-5, the comfort of communion with God; and says, 6-11, that such communion strengthens a man to face and overcome his enemies.

Christian application. One of the most beautiful of the Psalms; it meets the need of all, especially of the man who on a sickbed is debarred from the worship of the Sanctuary.²

Inscription, *The wilderness of Judah.* The district lying along the western shore of the Dead Sea, and between Jerusalem, Jericho and the Jordan.

1. *Longeth.* The force of this word, which occurs nowhere else in the Bible, seems to be, that the longing of the soul produces blindness and faintness.

2. *Thy power and Thy glory.* Words used of the Ark, 1 Sam. iv. 21; Ps. lxxviii. 61. The two clauses of this verse ought to be transposed, as in the original Hebrew.

11. *That sweareth by Him.* That giveth his allegiance to God.

PSALM LXIV.

Historical occasion. Evidently some time when his enemies were against David's life, and speaking evil of him with their tongues, inciting perhaps Saul against him.

Christian application. May be used as a Christian's prayer against his spiritual foes.

5. *Who shall see them? i.e.* the speakers, not the snares they lay.

¹ 2 Sam. xvii. 29.

² In the early Church this Psalm was sung every day. "The spirit and soul of the whole book of Psalms is contracted into this Psalm."—St. CHRYSOSTOM, quoted by Perowne.

7. *With an arrow.* Cp. Rev. vi. 2.

8. With this verse, compare the account of the plotting in 2 Sam. xvii. See also Prov. xviii. 7.

TWELFTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LXV.

Historical occasion. Probably, but not certainly, David's return to Jerusalem after Absalom's rebellion. His return may have been signalized by a very abundant harvest, or the description in the latter part of the verse may express David's joy in seeing the cultivated land after his sojourn in the wilderness.¹ The Psalm shows us, 1-4, the true way of approaching God; (a) Prayer, (b) Confession, (c) Thanksgiving; and then, 5-8, Celebrates God's wonderful works, especially in, 9-13, the fruits of harvest.

Christian application. It is the harvest hymn of the Christian Church, as she blesses God for the harvest of the earth, and for the spiritual harvest. Cp. John iv. 35.

4. *Temple.* The same Hebrew word is used for the tabernacle in 1 Sam. i. 9, iii. 3; 2 Sam. xxii. 7, and other passages.

5. *Terrible things.* Great, wonderful things. Deut. x. 21.

8. *Thy tokens.* The signs of God's near presence.

9. *Waterest it.* P. B. V. "blessest it."

The river of God, which is full of water. Cp. John iv. 10-14.

10. Man having first done his part in ploughing, etc., God blessed his work by sending the fertilizing rain.

¹ Some would refer the Psalm to Hezekiah's time (cp. Isa. xxxvii. 30), but without sufficient reason. With more probability it might perhaps be the thanksgiving for the first abundant harvest after the three years' famine of 2 Sam. xxi. 1.

PSALM LXVI.

Historical occasion. Perhaps some occasion of national deliverance in the reigns of Asa, Jehoshaphat or Hezekiah. Composed probably by some member of the great musical Levite families, and intended for the Temple worship.

Christian application. It is prophetic of the spiritual triumphs of Jesus Christ over men's souls.

3. *Submit themselves.* "Yield feigned obedience," as in margin.

6. *The sea.* Referring to the passages of the Red Sea and the Jordan.

9. *To be moved.* This verse and ver. 10 point to a time of trial in Israel's history, but yet of full national vigour.

12. *A wealthy place.* Literally, "abundance."

18. *If I regard.* Better the past tense, "If I had regarded . . . the Lord would not have heard me."

PSALM LXVII.

Historical occasion. Uncertain, but probably of Hezekiah's time, when the prophecies of Isaiah must have awakened spiritual hopes for their nation in the hearts of many.

Christian application. By its use at Evening Prayer as an alternative canticle instead of "Nunc dimittis," the Church shows that she regards it as a prophecy of Messiah and of the blessings of the Gospel.

1. Allusion here, and in vv. 6 and 7, to the high priest's blessing in Numb. vi. 24-27; but there the name of God is Jehovah, here it is Elohim.

2. To be noted as associating the blessing of Israel with the conversion of the world.

THIRTEENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM LXVIII.

Historical occasion. Jerusalem, and God's presence there, is the central thought of the Psalm; Israel and Judah are represented (ver. 27) as one united nation; the mention of Egypt and Ethiopia; the silence regarding Assyria or Babylon—all these, together with the impassioned character of its composition, point to David's time as that of the composition of this grand Psalm, and help to corroborate the inscription. It was probably composed on some re-entry of the Ark into Jerusalem, after some victory, for it more than once accompanied the army to battle.¹

Christian application. The reference of St. Paul to ver. 18² at once fixes the Messianic character of the Psalm, as prophetic of Christ's Resurrection and Ascension and the Descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. Hence it is fittingly appointed as a proper Psalm for Whitsun Day.

1. An obvious reference to Numb. x. 35, only Elohim is put for Jehovah.

4. *On the heavens.* The P. B. V. inserts "as it were upon an horse."

6. *God setteth the solitary in families.* P. B. V. is wrong.

7, 8. An echo of Moses' words, and of Deborah's song.³

9. *A plentiful rain.* In allusion, probably, to the manna, etc.

11. *Great was the company.* The reference here is

¹ 2 Sam. xi. 11.

² Eph. iv. 8.

³ Deut. xxxiii. 2; Judges v. 4, 5.

to the number of women who celebrated the victories. Hence "preachers" of P. B. V. gives a wrong idea. See Exod. xv.; Judges v.; 1 Sam. xviii. 6.

12. *She that tarried at home.* Cp. Judges v. 24, 30.

13. *Among the pots.* Rather "among the sheep-folds." Cp. again, Deborah's song, Judges v. 16.

The wings of a dove, etc. Meaning seems to be that though the men have behaved as cowards, and remained with their flocks instead of facing the enemy, they yet should reap the advantage of the complete victory gained, which is represented by the bird secure in her gorgeous plumage.

14. *As white as snow in Salmon.* Salmon was a low mountain near Shechem,¹ covered with trees of dark foliage. The meaning seems to be that the scattered arms and baggage of the kings resembled the snow as it lay in patches on the dark trees.

15. *The hill of God, etc.* Rather, "A hill of God is the hill of Bashan, a hill of peaks is the hill of Bashan." But

16. Though these hills be high, yet the little hill of Sion is better, for there God especially dwells.

18. *Received.* St. Paul, as if interpreting by the light of the Gospel, paraphrases this by the word "gave."²

19. *Who daily loadeth us, etc.* Better, "Who day by day beareth our burden."

21. *The hairy scalp.* A thick head of hair, emblem of the proud sinner. Cp. Samson and Absalom.

22. *I will bring again from Bashan, etc.* Not Israel, as in A. V., but Israel's enemies, who shall be brought from their places of refuge on every side, and given up

¹ Judges ix. 43.

² Eph. iv. 7, 8.

to the vengeance of God's people. Cp. the remarkable parallel passage in Amos ix. 1-4.

24, 25. Description of a solemn religious procession.

26. The chorus sung by the damsels.

27. Four tribes mentioned to represent the whole nation; *little*¹ *Benjamin*, as first royal tribe; *Judah*, as the most powerful, and the tribe of the Psalmist, *Zebulun and Naphtali*, as representing the courage of the nation under its most disinterested and best aspect. See Judges v. 18.

29. *Temple*. See Ps. lxxv. 4.

30. *Company of the spearmen*. Literally, "the beasts of the reeds," probably a symbolical expression for Egypt, the beast being the crocodile, and the reed the bulrush which grows in the Nile.

Bulls. Probably the leaders of the people.

Calves of the people. The people themselves. Cp. Ps. xxii. 12; Amos iv. 1. The Psalmist calls upon God to rebuke all the enemies of the truth, until they submit and pay tribute.

31. *Ethiopia, etc.* Cp. Acts viii. 26-29.

32-35. As the ancient Israelite exulted in the thought of God's power and majesty, so the Christian may use these verses as he meditates upon the victories of His Divine Lord.

THIRTEENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LXIX.

Historical occasion. Ascribed by St. Paul to David,² and there is no good reason for doubting that it is his composition, written at a time of deep depression,

¹ 1 Sam. ix. 21.

² Rom. xi. 9.

perhaps at the close of his life, when Adonijah was raising up a rebellion.

Christian application. It is clearly Messianic, being quoted both by our Lord of Himself,¹ and by His Apostles of Him.² Hence its appointment for Good Friday.

2. Cp. Ps. xl. 2, to which Psalm many points of resemblance may be traced in this.

7. *I have borne reproach.* Cp. Jer. xv. 15. The resemblance of the two passages has led some to regard the Psalm as Jeremiah's, but without sufficient reason.

8. Cp. John i. 11, vii. 5; Isa. liii. 3.

9. *The reproaches, etc.* Applied to our Lord by St. Paul, Rom. xv. 3.

12. *Sit in the gate.* The rulers and chief men.

The song. Cp. Job xxx. 9.

13. *In an acceptable time.* Cp. Isa. xlix. 8; 2 Cor. vi. 2.

14. *Out of the mire.* Cp. Jer. xxxviii. 6.

15. *Shut her mouth, etc.* Referring to the large stone with which the mouth of a pit or well was closed.

21 *Gall.* The Hebrew word means some "poisonful herb,"³ perhaps the poppy.⁴ St. John (xix. 28, 29) regards this verse as fulfilled in our Blessed Lord. See also Mark xv. 23; Matt. xxvii. 34.

22-28. St. Paul (Rom. xi. 11) suggests to us the true explanation of these terrible words of imprecation. They are words of warning, and therefore of mercy. If we regard them as the real wish of the Psalmist's heart for his enemies, we must bear in mind that our Lord Himself points out the difference between the spirit of the older dispensation and the spirit of the

¹ Ver. 2; cp. with John xv. 25.

² See, for instance, ver. 9 and John ii. 17.

³ Deut. xxix. 18, marg. ⁴ So Art. "Gall," in *Dict. of Bible*.

newer.¹ At the same time, there can be no doubt, as both St. Peter² and St. Paul³ show, that the words were fulfilled in the persons of our Lord's enemies.

27. *Add iniquity unto iniquity, i.e.* "Accumulate the records of their sins" in Thy Book.

28. *The book of the living.* See Exod. xxxii. 32. The expression is used, or referred to, by Daniel (xii. 1), St. Paul (Phil. iv. 3), and by our Lord (Rev. iii. 5, xxii. 19).

31. *Horns and hoofs.* Animals fitted for sacrifice, being of the right age, as shown by the horns, and cloven-footed, as shown by the hoofs.

35. *Build the cities.* See Ps. li. 18. This wish or prayer of David seems to have had its fulfilment in the acts of Solomon and Rehoboam.⁴ There is no need to regard this verse as a liturgical addition of later times, or to postpone the date of the whole Psalm.

PSALM LXX.

A repetition, with slight variations, of Ps. xl. 13-17. The name "Elohim" is in part substituted for that of "Jehovah" in the earlier Psalm. Perhaps this Psalm was detached from Ps. xl. for some liturgical purpose, and so used separately. See further, Ps. xl.

¹ Luke. ix. 54-56.

² Acts i. 20.

³ Rom. xi. 9-11.

⁴ 1 Kings ix. 15; 2 Chron. viii. 2, 3, xi. 6-10.

LESSON VII.

FOURTEENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM LXXI.

Historical occasion. Uncertain. The Psalm is, in the main, a compilation from earlier psalms, and was evidently written by one in old age.¹ There is nothing against its being David's, although some think it was composed by Jeremiah.²

Christian application. By using this Psalm in the Office for the Visitation of the Sick, the Church shows distinctly how she regards it as embodying the thoughts and prayers of the sick Christian as much as it did those of the afflicted Israelite.

7. *A wonder.* Either (1) because of God's protecting care, or (2) in the sense of a sign, as Ezek. xii. 6, etc.

22. *Holy One of Israel.* A title of God, very frequent in Isaiah, but occurring only three times in the Psalms,—here and in Ps. lxxviii. 41, lxxxix. 18.

23. *Which Thou hast redeemed.* Cp. David's words, 1 Kings i. 29.

PSALM LXXII.

Historical occasion. Generally admitted to be of

¹ See vv. 5, 9, 18.

² A conclusion suggested partly by the LXX. inscription, which calls it "A Psalm of David, of the sons of Jonadab, and of those who were first led captive." But this means only that the LXX. believed it to be a real Davidic Psalm, and a specially favourite one of the Rechabites and first captives.

Solomon's composition, and, from its tenor, in the early part of his reign, although ver. 10 may point to a somewhat later period of his life.

Christian application. The tone of the Psalm is Messianic throughout, many of the expressions being not applicable to Solomon, but only to One greater than he.

1. *The King.* Messiah, as the old Jewish commentator allows.

3. *The mountains, etc.* Peace shall be proclaimed on the high places, as in Isa. xl. 9, lii. 7.

6. P. B. V. "like rain into a fleece of wool" (used for collecting the rain-drops in a dry season; cp. Judges vi. 37). The Hebrew word means something *shorn or mown*; the Bible V. is best.

8. *The river.* The Euphrates. Cp. Exod. xxiii. 31.

10. *Tarshish.* Probably the great Phenician port, Tartessus, in Spain. The expression "Tarshish and the isles" represents the countries to the west of Palestine, and may vaguely include England, with which the Phenicians even then probably traded.

11. *Sheba and Seba.* The nations of Asia and Africa. Sheba was a South Arabian country;¹ Seba an African country bordering on Ethiopia.²

15. *Prayer—made for Him, i.e. for the King,* out of gratitude for blessings conferred. The P. B. V. here seems to be wrong.

16. *Handful.* Rather, abundance.

17. This verse recalls God's promise to Abraham.

18, 19. These verses form the Doxology which closes the Second Book of the Psalter. They are not an original part of the Psalm.

¹ Gen. x. 28.

² Gen. x. 7; Isa. xliii. 3.

20. *The Son of Jesse.* Cp. 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. This verse was probably added to mark the close of a first or earlier collection of Psalms, in which the greater number (sixty at least) are Davidic.

FOURTEENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LXXIII. [Commences Third Book of the Psalter ; lxxiii—lxxxix.]

Historical occasion. This and the ten following Psalms are ascribed to Asaph.¹ It is a meditation upon the state of society in the Psalmist's time, and may well have been written in the evil times (spiritually) towards the close of Solomon's reign. The Psalm (1-15) describes the wicked and their condition, with the effect upon the Psalmist's mind; and (16-28) affords the true answer to all the difficulties experienced by him.

Christian application. As with the Psalmist, so with the Christian, prayer and meditation upon God's Word are the only means of answering the many puzzles of human life.

4. *No bands.* No pain, doubts, misgivings.

7. *More than heart could wish.* Rather, the thoughts of their hearts break (or, overflow) all bounds.

10. *Therefore his people return.* The people are led astray by the pride and pomp of these godless persons, and obtain, as they imagine, much advantage from them.

12. With this verse the Psalmist begins to describe his own reflections.

¹ See Ps. l.

23, 24. Though he cannot understand all God's ways, yet he is content to place himself in God's hands.

26. An anticipation of the future life.

PSALM LXXIV.

Historical occasion. Most likely the invasion of Judah and Jerusalem in the time of Rehoboam,¹ by Shishak, King of Egypt. Jeremiah seems to have this Psalm in his thoughts in Lam. ii. 4, 7, 9.

Christian application. The Psalm may be used as a prayer against the inroads of unbelief upon the spiritual Zion.

6. *The carved work,*² etc. Words most suitable in the mouth of one living when the Temple would be in its first glory, and there would still be a remembrance of the day of its consecration.

7. *They have defiled,* etc. The P. B. V. here is more according to the Hebrew idiom.

8. *Synagogues.* Places of assembly, such probably as Ramah, Shiloh, Gibeon, Bethel.

9. *No more any prophet.* The prophetic gift was withheld for a time, in consequence of the sin of the people.

13, 14. *Dragons.* Sea monsters; *leviathan*, the crocodile. This allusion to the destruction of Pharaoh and his host is most apt at the time of an Egyptian invasion of Judah.

The people inhabiting, etc. Not the Israelites, but, as is most natural, the wild beasts dwelling in the wilderness, to whom the bodies of the dead Egyptians became a prey. Cp. Prov. xxx. 25.

19. *The multitude—the congregation.* The same word in the Hebrew.

¹ 1 Kings xiv. 25, 26; 2 Chron. xii. 2-9.

² 1 Kings vi. 18, 32, 35.

FIFTEENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM LXXV.

Historical occasion. Doubtful. Not improbably it was the song of thanksgiving after the deliverance prayed for in the last Psalm. It bears a strong resemblance to the Songs of Hannah and Mary. The Psalm is dramatic, introducing God as the Speaker in vv. 2-5, or perhaps only vv. 2, 3.

Christian application. It is prophetic of Christ's victories over His enemies.

2. *When I shall receive, etc.* Rather, "When I shall take a set time," *i.e.* when the day of judgment is come, the day of the Lord.¹

3. *The pillars.* (1) The foundations upon which the physical order of things is set, or meted out (cp. Isa. xl. 12); (2) The rulers to whom is committed the moral government of the world (cp. 1 Sam. ii. 8).

4. *Your horn.* In allusion to the ornament for the forehead. Some see here a reference to the speech of Rabshakeh.²

6. *Promotion.* Rather, lifting up, deliverance. The same word occurs in vv. 4, 5, 7 (setteth up), 10 (exalted).

8. *Wine is red.* Rather, "is foaming."

Full of mixture. Strongly spiced, to increase its strength and intoxicating power.

PSALM LXXVI.

Historical occasion. The miraculous discomfiture and overthrow of Sennacherib's army.³

¹ Cp. Ps. cii. 13; Hab. ii. 3 (appointed time). ² 2 Kings xviii. 19-35.

³ 2 Kings xix. 35; 2 Chron. xxxii. 21; Isa. xxxvii. 36.

Christian application. Some of the ancient Fathers see in this Psalm a prophetic vision, as it were, of the final judgment.

2. *Salem.* The ancient name of Jerusalem. Gen. xiv. 18;¹ Heb. vii. 1, 2.

3. *The arrows, etc.* Cp. 2 Kings xix. 32.

4. *Than the mountains of prey.* Rather, "*from the mountains of prey,*" there being no comparison as in A. V.

5. *Slept their sleep, i.e.* of death. 2 Kings xix. 35.

10. *Shalt Thou restrain.* Rather "Shalt Thou gird Thyself with," *i.e.* "make thine enemies a very sword in Thine hand." Cp. Isa. x. 5-15.

PSALM LXXVII.

Historical occasion. Quite uncertain; but some personal or national distress almost certainly before the time of Habakkuk, that is, of Manasseh, or Josiah. Cp. with the Psalm Hab. iii., which has many similarities.

Christian application. The contemplation of God's mercies in the past give peace and hope for the future.

4. *Mine eyes waking, i.e.* I cannot sleep, cannot close my eyelids.

13. *In the sanctuary.* Rather "is holy," as P. B. V. Cp. Isa. xxxv. 8.

16. *The waters,*—of the Red Sea.

18. *In the heaven.* Or, "round about," as P. B. V.; the thunders of God echoing amid the heights of Sinai.

¹ "Shalem," in Gen. xxxiii. 18, is not the same place. It would be better there to translate it "in peace."

FIFTEENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LXXVIII.

Historical occasion. Composed for the public worship in the Temple, most probably either (1) soon after the building of the Temple, or (2) in the reign of Abijah, of whose apology for Judah's some expressions in this Psalm remind us. The Psalm may be divided thus: 1-8. Introduction; the people called to attend to the instruction to be derived from considering the past history of their nation; 9-31. Sketch of the events in the wilderness; 32-42. Reflections of the Psalmist; 43-53. Sketch of the miracles of the Exodus. 54-64. Sketch of the entry into the Promised Land, and of the falling away of the people into idolatry; 65-72. Rejection of Ephraim and Shiloh, the choice of Judah, David and Zion.

Christian application. The use made by St. Matthew^a, of ver. 2 shows us that the history of God's chosen people is a parable of instruction to us.

9. *The children of Ephraim . . . turned back.* Ephraim, as at first the most powerful tribe, is probably put for the whole nation. The particular event referred to here is quite uncertain. Cp. Judg. i. 29.

12. *Zaan.* Tanis, in the eastern part of lower Egypt. "The field" is the country round the town, and is believed to have been in great part that which is now covered by Lake Menzaleh. Cp. Numb. xiii. 22.

25. *Angels' food.* See margin. The meaning probably is food from the place where Angels dwell, or supplied by the ministry of Angels. Or it may mean food of the nobles or princes, *i.e.* the best food.

^a 2 Chron. xiii. 4-12.

^a Matt. xiii. 34, 35.

Cp. Job xxiv. 22, xxxiv. 20, for use of word in this sense. Our Lord teaches us the spiritual meaning of the manna food in John vi. 49-51.

35. *Their Rock*. Cp. Deut. xxxii. 4.

47. *Vines*. Extensively cultivated in ancient Egypt, though not mentioned in Exod. ix. 22-32; cp. Gen. xl. 9.

Frost. Rather, perhaps, "hailstones" as in margin.

54. *This mountain*. See ver. 68.

60. *The Tabernacle of Shiloh*. See Josh. xviii. 1; cp. Jer. vii. 12.

61. *His strength—His Glory*. The Ark. Cp. Ps. lxiii. 2; 1 Sam. iv. 21.

72. The abrupt conclusion of the Psalm is believed by some to mark its composition as belonging to David's lifetime.

SIXTEENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM LXXIX.

Historical occasion. The same as Ps. lxxiv.

Christian application. As a confession of sin, and of the righteousness of God's judgments, the Psalm is at all times applicable, although such expressions as that in ver. 6 can scarcely be applied in any Christian sense.

2. Quoted 1 Macc. vii. 16 as then fulfilled. This would not of course hinder a strictly historical application to an earlier period.

4. *Neighbours*. Edom, Moab, etc. So also Ps. lxxx.

6. The expression points to an early date for the Psalm.

6, 7. Jeremiah (x. 25) quotes¹ these verses. See also Jer. xiv. 16, xvi. 4, for other resemblances.

¹ It is regarded as an open question by some whether Jeremiah quotes the Psalm, or the Psalm quotes Jeremiah.

8. *Prevent.* In the old English sense of "going before," "anticipating."

11. *The prisoner.* Reference most likely to the captives led into Egypt by Shishak, and there sacrificed to his gods. Such scenes are portrayed on the monuments at Karnak, erected in Shishak's reign.

PSALM LXXX.

Historical occasion. Almost certainly the same national disaster which occasioned Psalms lxxiv. and lxxix. The tone of the Psalm points to some earlier disaster than the captivity either of Israel or of Judah. See ver. 1.

Christian application. The Psalm may be taken as prophetic of the spread of Christianity, with prayer for deliverance from the bondage of sin. The Jewish interpreters regard ver. 17 as prophetic of Messiah. Cp. Luke i. 66.

1. *Between the Cherubim.* Shows the temple was still standing.

2. See Numb. ii. 16-24. These three tribes followed the Ark, bringing up the rear.

5. *The bread of tears.* Allusion perhaps to the manna.

8. *A vine.* Cp. Jacob's blessing of Joseph, Gen. xlix. 22.

17. *The man of Thy right hand.* The Jewish nation, or perhaps some special deliverer appointed by God.

PSALM LXXXI.

Historical occasion. The Psalm is evidently intended for the worship of the Sanctuary, probably (ver. 2) at the Feast of Tabernacles. David's care for the music

of the Sanctuary, and the inscription, both point to his reign as the date of the Psalm. In its structure it is dramatic ; 1-5. A call from the Psalmist to praise God ; 6-16. God speaks, recounting His mercies to the people.

Christian application. As the Feast of Tabernacles commemorated God's mercies to the Israelites in the wilderness, so on the great feasts of the Christian year the Christian may use this Psalm as reminding him of God's mercies through Christ.

2. *Harp.* Hebrew, kinnor ; probably, the most ancient Hebrew stringed instrument. Gen. iv. 21.

3. *Blow up the trumpet.* The trumpet was commonly made of ram's horn. Cp. Ps. cl. 3.

In the new moon. See Numb. xxix. 1 ; Lev. xxiii. 24.

5. *I heard a language, etc.* The voice of God speaking from Mount Sinai.

10. *Open thy mouth wide.* To receive spiritual as well as temporal food.

SIXTEENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LXXXII.

Historical occasion. Some time of reformation, such as that under Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xix. 5-11), or that indicated by Isaiah (iii. 13-15).

Christian application. In all stations of life God requires faith in Him, and obedience to His law, in the discharge of the duties of daily life.

1. *Of the mighty.* Rather "of God," *i.e.* amongst the Israelites.

Among the gods. The rulers of Israel. See ver. 6 and John x. 34.

6. *Ye are gods.* By reason of God's covenant with them.

7. *The Princes.* Such as those in Ps. lxxxiii. 11.

PSALM LXXXIII.

Historical occasion. The confederacy of Moab, Ammon (see ver. 8), and others against Judah and Jehoshaphat mentioned in 2 Chron. xx. The author probably was Jahaziel, "a Levite of the sons of Asaph."¹

Christian application. The Psalm may be regarded as prophetic of the spiritual enemies of Christ's Church and their complete overthrow.

6. *Hagarenes.* A nomadic people dwelling in the east of Gilead, and conquered by the Reubenites in the time of Saul.²

7. *Gebal.* The mountainous district south of Edom, bordering on the Elanitic gulf of the Red Sea. *Amalek* was destroyed by Simeon before the captivity.³

8. *Assur.* The first note of Assyria as a rising power.

11. *Oreb, etc.* For the history see Judges iv. v. vii. viii. Cp. Isa. x. 26.

16. *That they may seek, etc., i.e.* that they may acknowledge their subjection to Thee.

PSALM LXXXIV.

Historical occasion. Most probably the writer's flight with David from the insurrection of Absalom. Cp. Psalms xlii. xliii. The Psalm has three divisions (1-4, 5-8, 9-12), each describing the longing of the Psalmist's heart after the Sanctuary, and the blessedness of those who dwell there, and trust in God.

Christian application. The blessedness which the Psalmist found in God's Sanctuary, the Christian finds there too, and in the thought of the eternal temple in Heaven.

¹ 2 Chron. xx. 14. This Psalm and the chapter should be read together.

² 1 Chron. v. 10, 18-22.

³ 1 Chron. iv. 43

6. *Valley of Baca.* Valley of weeping. The meaning is, that under the most trying circumstances, God's servant will find springs of spiritual comfort. *The rain also.* Divine grace shed abroad.

9. *Thine anointed.* The king.

11. *God is a Sun.* The only passage where God is so called.

PSALM LXXXV.

Historical occasion. Deliverance from some national disaster, perhaps David's return from exile, or Rehoboam's release from the power of Egypt.¹ But the depressed tone of vv. 4-7 suit better perhaps Nehemiah's time (Neh. i. 1-4).

Christian application. In its latter portion, the Psalm is essentially Messianic, prophetic of the blessings attendant upon Christ's Incarnation. Hence it is fitly appointed of Christmas Day.

1. *Brought back the captivity.* A general phrase for deliverance from trouble (cp. Job xlii. 10), and therefore not to be taken as necessarily marking the post-Captivity date of the Psalm.

10, 11. Fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

¹ 2 Chron. xii. 12.

LESSON VIII.

SEVENTEENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM LXXXVI.

Historical occasion. Quite uncertain. There is nothing specially to mark it as David's, but it may be his, although scarcely so vigorous in expression as some of the Psalms which are undoubtedly his.

Christian application. Prophetic of Christ in His humiliation praying to His heavenly Father.

9. Cp. Ps. xxii. 31.

11. *Thy way—Thy truth—Unite my heart.* Cp John xiv. 6.

13. *From the lowest hell.* From the place of the departed.

16. *Son of thine handmaid.* The expression points perhaps to the remembrance of a pious mother.

PSALM LXXXVII.

Historical occasion. Uncertain, but from resemblances to passages in Isaiah, not improbably the deliverance of Hezekiah and the people from Sennacherib.¹ The Psalm celebrates (1-3) the glory of Zion; and, 4-6, the union of all nations in Zion, who claim from her their spiritual birth.

Christian application. The Psalm is most distinctly Messianic, declaring the glory and beauty of the Christian Church.

I. *His, i.e.* "God's," not "Her" as P. B. V.

¹ See, for instance, Isa. ii. 2-4, xi. 10.

2. *More than all.* A reminiscence of Shiloh and Bethel.

4. *Rahab.* Poetical name for Egypt. *Babylon.* Mentioned perhaps by reason of the embassy sent to Hezekiah. *To them.* Rather "among them," as forming part of God's people. *This man was born there.* Cp. ver. 5. A prophecy of the admission of the Gentiles into the privileges of God's chosen people. Fulfilled in the Christian Church. Cp. Rom. xi. 17.

PSALM LXXXVIII.

Historical occasion. Doubtful; it has been variously ascribed to Uzziah, Hezekiah, Jeremiah. It may well have been written in the troubled times after the death of Solomon. It is the most intensely sad of all the Psalms, ending with no ray of hope. This fact almost certainly prevents it from being David's.

Christian application. By appointing it for use on Good Friday, the Church shows that she regards it as prophetic of Christ's sufferings.

5. *Free among the dead, i.e.* He is discharged from all the duties of life. Or, perhaps, he is cast away among the dead.

8. *I am shut up.* This might be the language of a leper, and thus point to Uzziah as the author. Cp. Job iii. 23, xix. 8. There are many parallels between this Psalm and the Book of Job, showing either great familiarity with the Book by the writer of the Psalm, or suggesting a common authorship.

SEVENTEENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM LXXXIX.

Historical occasion. The contents of the Psalm,

no less than the inscription, would lead us to place this Psalm in the time of Shishak's invasion, the first great reverse of the royal family of David. It ends with a Doxology, closing the Third Book of the Psalms.

Christian application. Prophetic of Christ's universal dominion,—appointed for Christmas Day.

5. *Congregation of the saints.* The holy ones, the Angels. So ver. 7.

10. *Rahab.* Egypt, as in P. B. V. Reference is probably to the destruction of Pharaoh's army at the time of the Exodus.

12. *Tabor.* A mountain in north-east of plain of Esdraelon, noted for its beauty and verdure.

30. Cp. 2 Sam. vii. 14-16.

37. *Faithful witness.* Most probably God Himself is meant, though some suppose the rainbow, or the moon.

40. This verse describes the ruin and havoc made by Shishak. See 2 Chron. xii. 4.

43. *Turned the edge, etc.* Describes ignominious submission of Judah.

50. *The reproach of Thy servants, etc.* Such would be the feelings of one who, like Ethan, recollected the glorious days of David and Solomon.

51. *Have reproached the footsteps.* Or, as we might say, "Dogged the heels" of Thine Anointed, Thy Christ; truly fulfilled in the treatment of Jesus Christ.

EIGHTEENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XC. [Commences Fourth Book of the Psalter, xc—cvi.]

Historical occasion. Probably the oldest, as it is one

of the most sublime, of the Psalms, and with very little doubt written by Moses, bewailing the sin of the people at Kadesh.

Christian application. This is shown by its use in the Office for the Burial of the Dead. The Psalm gives utterance to the thoughts of the Christian as clearly as it did to those of Moses or any other ancient Israelite.

3. *Return, ye children of men.* Of doubtful meaning. The two most probable meanings are (1) Return to the dust (Gen. iii. 19), and (2) As soon as one generation dies, let another come in its place (Eccl. i. 4). Either sets in strong contrast God's eternity and man's constant changeableness. Cp. Ps. civ. 28-30.

6. *It is cut down.* P. B. V. inserts "dried up," but without any authority.

The days of our years, etc. The lives of Moses, Aaron, Miriam and Joshua extended beyond what had already become the ordinary length of human life. See also especially Caleb's words (Josh. xiv. 10), as showing that at eighty-five he was an instance of unusual longevity.

15. A reference to the forty years' wandering?

PSALM XCI.

Historical occasion. Quite uncertain. It is the first of a series of Psalms (xci-c.) celebrating Jehovah's praises, and evidently intended for the Temple worship. This, as nearly all the Psalms of Book IV., is anonymous. It is a meditative Psalm, the author at one time speaking in the first person, and sometimes addressing himself, according to the varying feeling of the moment, and finally (vv. 14-16) seeming to hear God's voice speaking to him.

Christian application. The Christian may well use this beautiful Psalm as an expression of his own trust and confidence in God.

3. *Snare of the fowler.* Cp. Ps. cxxiv. 7; and for its spiritual meaning see 2 Tim. ii. 26.

4. Allusion here to the cherubim covering the mercy-seat with their wings. 1 Kings viii. 7.

10. *Thy dwelling.* Literally, Thy tent. Perhaps points to the Psalm being a pilgrim song.

11, 12. Partly quoted by Satan against our Lord in the wilderness. In regard to the ministry of angels, we may compare Exod. xxiii. 20 (where the very same expression is used as here), Heb. i. 14, etc.

16. *With long life.* The great temporal blessing of the Old Testament, speaking spiritually of the eternal life. This Psalm should be read side by side with the words of Eliphaz the Temanite, Job v. 17-26.

PSALM XCII.

Historical occasion. Composed for use in the Temple service, but at what date is uncertain. See inscription.

Christian application. For the Christian it is a song of thankfulness to God, and of joyful looking forward, enemies triumphed over, to the Heavenly Sabbath.

6. *Brutish man.* One in a state of nature.

*Fool.*¹ Literally, "fleshy." Cp. the word "carnal" in St. Paul's Epistles. The Psalmist feels that communion with God is the real difference between the righteous man and the wicked.

10. *Unicorn.* The buffalo, or wild ox.

¹ These two words, "brutish" and "fool," occur but three times in the Psalms, and always together (Ps. xlix. 20, xciv. 8).

12. *The palm tree—the cedar.* These two trees, emblem the one of long life and productiveness, the other of firmness and grandeur, complete together the picture of the spiritually-minded man.

13. The courts of the Temple were probably planted with trees for the sake of shade.

EIGHTEENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XCIII.

Historical occasion. Doubtful; perhaps after the return from the Captivity. It was composed for the Temple worship.

Christian application. As setting forth the triumph of Jehovah, it may well be regarded as prophetic of Christ's reign over the world.

3. *The floods.* Great rivers and the sea are used in the Bible as emblems of the powers of the world as arrayed against God. Cp. Isa. viii. 7.

Thine house. Possibly a reference to Temple rebuilt under Zerubbabel.

PSALM XCIV.

Historical occasion. A time of internal corruption and of oppression of the weak by the strong, of God's servants by the unbelievers, rather than of suffering from a foreign foe. The reign of Ahaz or Manasseh might have been such a time.

Christian application. The Christian, puzzled perhaps, as the ancient Israelite was, by God's dealings with men, can wait His time for a solution of all difficulties (vv. 12-14). Cp. Heb. xii. 5-7.

3. *How long.* Cp. Rev. vi. 10.

7. *The Lord shall not see.* The language this of Israelite, not of foreign, oppressors.

10. *Shall not He know.* Not in Hebrew, and unnecessary. The P. B. V. is better.

11. Quoted by St. Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 20. So far from not observing (ver. 7), God reads even men's thoughts.

15. *But judgment, etc.* Whatever may be present difficulties, God's dealings, and His judgments, will be seen in the end to be truly righteous, and His faithful servants (the true in heart) will acknowledge (follow) it.

17. *In silence.* The silence of the grave.

20. *Shall the throne, etc.* God does not wink at any injustice committed in the name of law. As instances of this "framing mischief by a law," see case of Naboth (1 Kings xxi.), and especially that of our Lord.

21. *The righteous.* The word is in the singular. *The innocent blood.* Cp. words of Judas and Pilate (Matt. xxvii. 4, 24). The verse is truly Messianic.

NINETEENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM XCV.

Historical occasion. Doubtful; probably a post-Captivity Psalm.

Christian application. Used, from the earliest times, in the daily service of the Church. The Epistle to the Hebrews shows that warnings of Psalm are as much for Christians as for Jews. It distinctly ascribes it to the Holy Ghost (iii. 7-11), and speaks of it as "in David," i.e. "in the Psalms" (iv. 7).

6. *Our Maker.* In reference not to creation, but to Israel's adoption as God's chosen people (see Deut. xxxii. 15, 18). And so the Christian may apply it.

7. *To-day.* The present time ; there must be no postponement of obedience. See Heb. iii. 13.

8. *As in the provocation, etc.* Literally, "as at Meribah ; as in the day of Massah." Two places were called Meribah. Exod. xvii. 2, 7 ; Numb. xx. 13.

10. *Do err.* Wander. *My ways.* In allusion probably to Exod. xiii. 17, 18, xxiii. 20.

11. *I swear.* See Numb. xiv. *My rest.* The Canaan rest of Israel was a type of the Christian's rest in Heaven. See Heb. iii. iv.

PSALM XCVI.

Historical occasion. In the first instance, the bringing of the Ark by David to Mount Zion, in connection with which event it is found to a great extent in 1 Chron. xvi. It appears to have been re-cast, and to have received its present form after the return from the Babylonish Captivity.¹

Christian application. The Psalm is prophetic of Christ's reign. It has been not inaptly called "a missionary hymn for all ages."

1. *A new song.* Not the Psalm itself, but the hymn of adoration to be sung when Jehovah enters His Kingdom. Cp. Rev. xv. 3, and see Isa. xlii. 10.

5. *Idols, i.e. vanities.* Cp. 1 Cor. viii. 4 ; Isa. ii. 8, 18-20, xlv. 10.

6. *Sanctuary.* In 1 Chron. xvi. 27 it is "place." In Isa. lx. 13 we have "the place of My Sanctuary."

7-9. Borrowed in part from Ps. xxix. 1-3. *The beauty of holiness.* See note on Ps. xxix. 2. It is the wedding-garment of Christ's parable.²

¹ This explanation is suggested by the LXX. title of the Psalm, which is "A Psalm of David, when the Temple was built after the Captivity."

² Delitsch.

11. *Let the heavens, etc.* The curse under which it groaned being removed, all creation rejoices. Cp. St. Paul, Rom. viii. 21, 22.

12. *Trees of the wood.* Possibly a reference to the tarrying of the ark at Kirjath-jearim (1 Sam. vii. 1, 2), or "The city of the woods." Cp. also Isa. xlv. 23, lv. 12.

13. *For He cometh.* Cp. Jude 14, 15.

PSALM XCVII.

Historical occasion. Probably some great national deliverance, when the heart of the people was brought back to acknowledge "Jehovah is King."

Christian application. The Psalm celebrates the setting-forth of God's glory among all nations, and is prophetic therefore of the first, and also of the second coming of our Lord.

1. *The isles.* See Ps. lxxii. 10, note. Cp. Isa. xlii. 4, etc.

2. *Clouds and darkness.* 3. *Fire.* Cp. Deut. iv. 11, v. 22.

4, 5. Possibly some late convulsion of nature (see Amos i. 1; Zech. xiv. 5) is still in fresh remembrance. Cp. Mic. i. 4; Isa. xl. 4, 5.

7. *All ye gods.* Angels, as in Heb. i. 6.

11. *Light is sown.* Cp. Ps. cxii. 4, and see Paradise Lost, v. 1, 2.

NINETEENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM XCVIII.

Historical occasion. Almost certainly the same as Ps. xcvi. The two, from their similarity, are doubtless by same author.

Christian application. The Psalm looks forward to future ages, and sings of the triumphs of Christ, and of His coming. Such a Psalm is fitly used in daily evening prayer of our Church.

1. *A new song.* See Ps. xcvi. 1, note.

3. *All the ends, etc.* So Isa. lii. 10.

6. *Cornet.* P. B. V. has *shawm*. A species of clarionet.

8. *The floods, etc.* Cp. Isa. lv. 12.

PSALM XCIX.

Historical occasion. The same probably as the preceding. The thought of the Psalm is first of the Holiness of God (1-5), and then second of the real priesthood (Exod. xix. 6; 1 Peter ii. 9) of all true worshippers of God.

Christian application. As in the four preceding Psalms, the coming of Jesus Christ, and His reign over the earth, is in reality announced. Cp. Rev. xi. 15-18.

1. *Between the Cherubim.* Exod. xxv. 22; Isa. xxxvii. 16.

3. *It (or, He) is Holy.* So vv. 5 and 9. For the thrice repetition, cp. Isa. vi. 3; Rev. iv. 8.

4. *The King.* Jehovah.

5. *At His footstool.* The Mercy-Seat. See 1 Chron. xxviii. 2; cp. Isa. lx. 13.

6. *They called, etc.* These three, the types of the Priesthood of their nation, were all mighty in prayer. See, e.g., Exod. xxxii. 31, 32; Numb. xvi. 48; 1 Sam. vii. 8, 9; cp. Jer. xv. 1.

8. *Thou tookest vengeance, i.e.* on the people at large, for their misdeeds (inventions).

PSALM C.

Historical occasion. The same, doubtless, as the

preceding. Each of the four verses is a call to praise and adoration.

Christian application. The Psalm is prophetic of Jehovah's reign over all the earth, and prepares us for the thought of the "Good Shepherd." Hence its universal use, in many versions, among Christians in their daily worship.

3. *Not we ourselves.* The marginal reading "His we are" is perhaps better. Cp. Ps. xcv. 7; Isa. xliii. 1.

4, 5. These verses are a true note of Gospel times. The Psalm invites to that of which Isaiah prophesies (Isa. ii. 2, 3).

PSALM CI.

Historical occasion. The Psalm is the prayer of a king, almost certainly David, desiring and striving after personal holiness, and the purity of his family and court. The Ark probably was still in the house of Obed-Edom (see ver. 2, which seems to hint at a long-ing for its presence in Jerusalem).

Christian application. The Psalm may be well used as a preparation for the Holy Communion by the devout soul which prays, "Oh, when wilt Thou come unto me?"¹

2. *I will behave myself wisely.* How suggestive these words of the need of personal holiness. Cp. Ps. xv. and xxiv.; also 1 Pet. i. 15.

5. *Privily slandereth.* Cp. Catechism, "to keep my tongue from slandering."

8. *Early.* Literally, "each morning." The work of purification is continuous; it can never be relaxed.

¹ Bishop Wordsworth.

LESSON IX.

TWENTIETH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CII.

Historical occasion. The Psalm appears to have been written towards the close of the Captivity (vv. 13, 14) by one whose private griefs were intensified by the thought of his country's sorrows. Some, comparing Psalm with Dan. ix., would ascribe it to that prophet. Others suggest Nehemiah as the author, some seventy or eighty years later, and connect the Psalm with the impressions derived from his ride round Jerusalem (Neh. ii. 11-20).

Christian application. The use made of vv. 25-27 in Ep. to Hebrews (i. 10-12) clearly shows the Messianic application of the Psalm. Its appointment for use (as the fifth of the Penitential Psalms) on Ash Wednesday shows the sense of the Church, that it expresses the feelings of each of her members in times of sorrow, as it does those of Her Divine Lord.

6. *A pelican.* So Lev. xi. 18, or cormorant, as in Isa. xxxiv. 11; Zeph. ii. 14.

7. *Sparrow.* Some lonely bird. Thomson, "Land and Book," p. 43.

11. *Declineth.* The lengthening shadow, as the sun declines.

13. *The set time.* This expression points to the end of the seventy years. But it may be applied to Nehemiah's time (cp. v. 14 with Neh. ii. 17-20, iv. 2).

17. *The destitute.* Or still more accurately, as P. B. V., "The poor destitute."

27. *Thou art the same.* Literally, "Thou art He." Cp. Isa. xli. 4, xlvi. 4.

PSALM CIII.

Historical occasion. Quite uncertain. The Syriac version ascribes it to David in his old age. It is a beautiful Psalm of God's love and care.

Christian application. It may well be used by any one who, tried by sin and sorrow, has felt God's mercy in the midst of all.

1. *All within me.* Every faculty of body, soul and spirit is to be enlisted in the praise of Jehovah.

5. *Thy mouth.* Same word as in Ps. xxxii. 9, where see note. Perhaps here it means "age," but meaning is very doubtful.

The eagle's. An allusion perhaps to ancient fable of the eagle's renewing its youth; but more probably P. B. V. is correct, the eagle being often an emblem of strength. See Deut. xxviii. 49; Is. xl. 31.

7. *His ways.* Cp. Exod. xxxiii. 13-19, xxxiv. 6. *His acts.* Exod. xxxiv. 10.

12. *Removed our transgressions.* How prophetic are these words of the work of JESUS CHRIST! Cp. Isa. xxxviii. 17; Mic. vii. 19.

13. *As a father.* Cp. Rom. viii. 15; Matt. vi. 9.

16. *The wind passeth, etc.* Cp. Jer. li. 1; Ezek. xvii. 10.

17. *Them that fear Him.* For third time condition of God's mercy is repeated.

20-22. Cp. the threefold blessing in Numb. vi. 23-27.

TWENTIETH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CIV.

Historical occasion. Quite uncertain. The Psalm was no doubt intended for the Temple worship. It is a grand lyric ode in praise of God's work in the creation of the universe. It follows fairly regularly the

work of creation described in Gen. i.; 2-4. Work of first and second days (Gen. i. 3-8); 5-18. The earth from a state of chaos (5, 6, Gen. i. 2) becomes fitted for animal life; Work of third day (Gen. i. 9-13); 19-24. Work of fourth day (Gen. i. 14-19), with a general reflection upon the variety and greatness of God's work; 25, 26. Work of fifth day (Gen. i. 21); which with work of sixth day has in former verses been already incidentally mentioned; 27-30. Everything in creation depends upon God; 31-35. A Hallelujah to God, with a prayer that sin may be banished.

Christian application. By appointing this Psalm for use on Whitsun Day, the Church teaches us that the same Holy Spirit who descended upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost was the great Divine Agent as well at the first as at what may be called the second creation (Gen. i. 2; John iii. 5).

2. *Like a curtain.* The Psalmist mentally compares the heavens with the curtain covering the Tabernacle. Cp. Exod. xxxvi. 14.

5. Cp. Job xxvi. 7.

8. *They go up, etc.* Literally, as margin, "the mountains ascend, the valleys descend." See Gen. i. 9; Cp. Paradise Lost, vii.

14. *Food.* Literally, bread. The mention of corn, wine and oil (vv. 14, 15) reminds us of Moses' description of the Promised Land (Deut. xi. 14).

18. *Conies.* Old English for "rabbit." The animal intended is the *Hyrax Syriacus*, for which there is no English name. It is of the same size as a rabbit, weak and defenceless. The animal is mentioned in Lev. xi. 5; Deut. xiv. 7; Prov. xxx. 26.

19. *The moon for seasons.* Feasts were fixed by the moon. Cp. Lev. xxiii. 4-6; Numb. xxviii.; Isa. i. 13, 14.

26. *Leviathan*. Not, as in Ps. lxxiv. 14, the "crocodile," which is not a marine animal (the "great and wide sea" being the Mediterranean), but any sea-monster, perhaps the whale.

29, 30. How beautiful a picture of the working of the Holy Spirit do these verses present to us.

35. *Praise ye the Lord*. Heb. "Hallelujah." The first occurrence, henceforth to be frequent, of this word in the Psalms. It was used in Jeremiah's time as a liturgical formula (xxxiii. 11), to commence (see Ps. cxi etc.) or conclude a Psalm.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CV.

Historical occasion. Verses 1-15 are found in 1 Chr xvi. 8-22, on the occasion of the Ark being brought to Mount Zion. Probably some such account of this Psalm may be given as of Ps. xcvi., the note on which see. Cp. Neh. ix. 5-15. The Psalm is highly picturesque in its structure. It may be divided thus;—1-7. Introduction; a call to remembrance of God's mercies; 8-15. The promise to, and God's care of, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; 16-22. The famine in Egypt; Joseph's mission; 23-26. Israel oppressed; the mission of Moses and Aaron; 27-38. The Plagues upon Egypt; the people delivered; 39-45. The triumphant march through the wilderness into the Promised Land.

Christian application. The Christian must ever feel, in reading these historical Psalms, that all these things happened unto them for ensamples unto us.

8. *A thousand generations*. Cp. Deut. vii. 9. The covenant was made with Abraham (Gen. xvii. 5), confirmed (xxii. 16-18), and renewed to Isaac (xxvi. 3) and to Jacob (xxviii. 13, 14, xxxv. 12).

11. *The lot.* The line by which the portion was measured out.

12. *A few men, etc.* Literally "men of number," easily counted. The Psalmist in thought contrasts their first number with the promise to Abraham (Gen. xiii. 16).

15. *Mine anointed.* Literally, "my Messiahs," or consecrated ones. What was really an ordinance of a later age is here applied to the patriarchs, who were never actually anointed.

19. *His word came.* Either (1) Joseph's interpretation of the dreams coming true, or (2) God's word of promise about Joseph being fulfilled.

Tried him. Either (1) Joseph's faith and patience had been tried by the long waiting for the fulfilment of God's promise, or (2) Joseph's interpretation of the dreams was the trial of his veracity.

28. *Darkness.* The last plague but one is put first. Then the others beginning with first follow in regular order, except that the fifth plague (murrain of beasts) and sixth (boils and blains) are omitted entirely.

31. *Lice.* Rather "gnats."

34. *Caterpillars.* Most probably the larvæ or young of the locust. Cp. Joel i. 4, where it is translated "cankerworm."

37. *Not one feeble.* Rather "not one that stumbled." Cp. Isa. v. 27, lxiii. 13.

40. *Bread of heaven.* The manna. Cp. John vi. 32.

45. *That they might observe, etc.* Cp. the object of Christ's sufferings, Tit. ii. 14.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CVI.

Historical occasion. Ps. cv. is a joyous retrospect God's past blessings and mercies to Israel; this

Psalm is also a retrospect, but one of confession for their many backslidings, both in the wilderness and in Canaan. It was probably a recast, after the Captivity, of some earlier Psalms. Cp. 1 Chron. xvi. 34-36 with verses 1, 47, 48; Neh. ix. 16-30. It closes with a Doxology, which ends the Fourth Book of the Psalter.

Christian application. The history of Israel affords instruction to Christians at all times. Cp. 1 Cor. x. 1-12; Heb. iii. 7-19. In the sins of Israel the Christian too may see a picture of his own transgressions.

6. *We have sinned.* Cp. Solomon's prayer, 1 Kings viii. 47.

12. *Then believed they, etc.* In allusion to Exod. xiv. 31, xv. 1.

14. The following acts of faithlessness are mentioned: The lusting after flesh (ver. 14); the rebellion of Korah, etc. (vv. 16-18); the golden calf (vv. 19-23); the refusal to enter the Promised Land (vv. 24-27); the idolatry in Moab (vv. 28-31); the murmuring for water at Kadesh (vv. 32, 33); the imperfect conquest of Canaan, and their consequent sin (vv. 34-39). Cp. Judges i.

20. *Their glory.* Jehovah, their God. Cp. Deut. iv. 6-8; Jer. ii. 11.

23. *In the breach.* As a soldier guarding a breach made in the wall.

24. *The pleasant land.* Cp. Jer. iii. 19; Zech. vii. 14.

28. *Baal-peor.* The God of Moab. *Of the dead.* The idols of Moab were as dead.

30. *Executed judgment.* Better than "prayed" of P. B. V. Numb. xxv. 7.

31. *Counted for righteousness.* Cp. Gen. xv. 6; James ii. 20-26; Rom. iv. 3, 9. 22; Gal. iii. 6.

32. *Waters of strife.* Literally, "waters of Meribah."

33. *Provoked his spirit.* Better, "They rebelled (Numb. xx. 10) against His Spirit." "While they rebelled against the Spirit of the Lord, Moses was so far affected by their rebellious unbelief, that he momentarily became weak in faith, and doubting words fell from his lips."¹

37. *Unto devils.* False gods. Cp. Deut. xxxii. 17.

41. Cp. accounts of different servitudes, as given in Judges.

44, 45. Cp. Lev. xxvi. 40-42; 1 Kings viii. 28-30, 50.

46. *To be pitied.* As Jehoiachin, 2 Kings xxv. 27. So Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah.

47. *Gather us, etc.* As God had promised, Deut. xxx. 3, 4. See also Isa. xi., xii.

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CVII. [Commences Fifth Book of the Psalter; cvii—cl.]

Historical occasion. Written doubtless by a Babylonian captive on the eve of the return of his nation to Judæa. But the Psalm is rather liturgical than historical. It may be divided thus;—1-3. Introduction, ver. 1, perhaps by chorus, vv. 2, 3, by leader or priest. Then thanks for deliverance, (1) 4-9, from wandering and famine in the wilderness, (2) 10-16, from prison, (3) 17-22, from sickness, (4) 23-32, from storm at sea. The Psalm closes (33-43) with praise of God for His mercies. Vv. 1, 8, 15, 21, 31, 43, were perhaps sung in chorus, the remainder by a single voice.

Christian application. In the groups of people who are described as praising God for deliverance, the

¹ Hengstenberg. Cp. Perowne, Moll.

Christian may see the spiritual history of Christ's Church, and his own.

3. *From the south.* Literally, "from the sea." To a person writing in Babylonia the Persian Gulf would be the south; to one in Palestine the sea (Mediterranean) would be the west.

8. *Oh that men.* Rather, "Oh that *these*," referring to the persons just mentioned. So in vv. 15, 21, 31.

10. *Darkness, etc.* This and several other expressions in this Psalm show familiarity with the older Scriptures, especially perhaps Isaiah and Job. See Isa. ix. 2, xlii. 7, xlix. 9; Micah vii. 8.

Affliction. See Job xxxvi. 8.

16. *Gates of brass.* Cp. Isa. xlv. 2.

17. *Are afflicted.* More forcibly, "bring affliction on themselves."

20. *Sent His word.* Cp. John i. 10, 14, 18, iii. 17.

Destructions. Lit. "grave-pits." Cp. Job xxxiii. 18, 22.

23. *Ships.* Not till Solomon's time did the Jews thus "go down." Ps. civ. 26.

25-30. Cp. Jonah's Psalm (chap. ii. 3-7).

35. Cp. Isa. xli. 18. See on ver. 10.

40. Quoted from Job xii. 21-24.

43. So Hosea xiv. 9.

TWENTY-SECOND DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CVIII.

Historical occasion. The return from the Captivity. This Psalm is simply a compilation from two Psalms of David (lvii. and lx.). It thus shows something of the interest taken by the Jews in this Book of Psalms, and how they adapted them to every phase of their national history.

Christian application. As a proper Psalm for Ascension Day, we may regard it as prophetic of the great event then commemorated. See especially ver. 5.

1-5. Taken from Ps. lvii. 7-11 ; 6-13 from Ps. lx.
5-12. See notes on those Psalms.

PSALM CIX.

Historical occasion. Some incident in David's life probably which called forth all those deep-laid feelings of vengeance, natural even to persecuted righteousness till chastened and purified by the teaching of Jesus Christ.

Christian application. We are taught by St. Peter (Acts i. 20) to see in this Psalm a prophecy of our Blessed Lord's betrayal ; and from John ii. 17 we see how the Apostles understood the 69th Psalm, and therefore doubtless this, as spoken by our Lord. Its language is indeed too fearful to be used by any man of his fellow-men. Cp. Rev. vi. 16.¹

6. *Satan.* Rather, "an adversary" as more general. Cp. Zech. iii. 1.

22. *Poor and needy.* The Messiah is here speaking of His suffering.

25. *Shaked their heads.* Ps. xxii. 6, 7 ; Matt. xxvii. 39.

¹ Another explanation is, that vv. 6-19 are the recital of what the Psalmist's adversaries said against him, and that in ver. 20 the Psalmist gathers all their maledictions into one, and hurls them back upon his foes. This view is supported by the fact of the change of person in ver. 6, and again in v. 20. It does not, however, get rid of the difficulty felt about the curses, as it allows ver. 20 to be the Psalmist's. Moreover, St. Peter's use of ver. 8 militates against this view, although the Apostle may simply have quoted it as illustrating the case of Judas. And so St. John (ii. 17) may have quoted Ps. lxix. 9.

LESSON X.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CX.

Historical occasion. Perhaps some setting out for war, the Priest encouraging the King. In any case, our Lord teaches us (Matt. xxii. 42-45; Mark xii. 35-37) that it was a conscious utterance of David, under Divine inspiration, respecting the Messiah. It, of all O. T. passages, is most frequently cited in N. T. See above, and Acts ii. 34, 35; 1 Cor. xv. 25; Heb. i. 13, v. 6, vii. 17, 21, x. 13; Luke xx. 41-44.

Christian application. As prophetic of the Sonship and Kingly office of the Messiah and of His victory over His enemies, it is fitly appointed for Christmas Day.

2. *Rod of thy strength.* The staff or sceptre, as an emblem of power. Cp. Jer. xlviii. 17.

3. *In the beauties of holiness.*¹ In holy garments, in holy array.

From the womb of the morning, etc. Means either (1) that as the dew is seen in the morning glistening in a multitude of drops on the grass, having come silently and unobserved, so shall Thy followers spring up silently, in great multitude, with ever-renewed youth, or (2) that the life of Christ our Lord is, as the dew, ever fresh, springing up again and again, often silently and unexpectedly, in the hearts of His disciples. Cp. 2 Sam. xvii. 12, xxiii. 4.

¹ The *stop* should be after "holiness," not after "morning."

4. *Melchizedek.* As was Melchizedek, so the Messiah is King and Priest. In Ep. to Hebrews (vii.) it is shown that the priesthood of Melchizedek typified the eternity of Christ's priesthood (vii. 3); and its universality, in that it was before the law, and was Gentile and not Jewish.

6. *The dead bodies.* Picture of the carnage of a battle-field.

Wound the heads, i.e. the chief men of many nations.

7. *He shall drink.* By slaking his thirst at the wayside brook, the victor gathers fresh strength for pursuit. The early fathers interpret this verse of Christ's cup of suffering and subsequent exaltation. Cp. Phil. ii. 8, 9.

PSALM CXI. (An Alphabetical Psalm.)

Historical occasion. Uncertain. It was probably composed for Temple worship. The Psalm throughout praises the works of God and His greatness.

Christian application. As a proper Psalm for Easter Day, it teaches us that God's promises and covenant were really fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and in His victory over death.

1. *The upright.* An inner circle of God's people. Outside is the general congregation. Exact sense given in P. B. V.

5. *Given meat.* As in the wilderness. The Christian may use the verse of the spiritual food received in the Holy Communion.

10. *The fear of the Lord.* Cp. Prov. i. 7, ix. 10; Job xxviii. 28.

PSALM CXII. (An Alphabetical Psalm.)

Historical occasion. See above on Ps. cxi.

Christian application. As Ps. cxi. spoke of God's righteousness, so does this of that derived from Him by His faithful servants. The Christian may therefore use it as descriptive (1) of Jesus Christ, (2) of His true disciples.

4. *A light.* Cp. Isa. lx. 1, and Symeon's song, Luke ii. 32.

5. *A good man, etc.* Rather, "Happy is it with the man who showeth," etc. Cp. Isa. iii. 10.

9. *He hath dispersed, etc.* Quoted by St. Paul, 2 Cor. ix. 9. Cp. Prov. xi. 24.

PSALM CXIII.

Historical occasion. This, with next five Psalms, formed "The Hallel," or Hymn of Praise sung at the Three Great Festivals, at the New Moons, and the Feast of the Dedication. At the Passover, Ps. cxiii. and cxiv. were sung before the Paschal meal, and when it was concluded then the remaining Psalms. See Matt. xxvi. 30; Mark xiv. 26.

Christian application. As Paschal hymns of praise for deliverance, the Church fitly appoints this and Ps. cxiv. for Easter Day.

5, 6. The contrast between the "high dwelling" and "the humbling" is well conveyed by the insertion of "and yet" in P. B. V.

7-9. Compare Hannah's song, and Mary's.

9. *To keep house.* To have a home, that is, with its laughter and joy of children. Cp. Exod. i. 21; 2 Sam. vii. 11.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CXIV.

Historical occasion. See on Ps. cxiii. This Psalm

presents us with a very fine and grand picture of the Exodus and entrance into Canaan. For rapidity of action, abruptness and fire, with firmly-seated faith, this Psalm perhaps has no equal.

Christian application. See on Ps. cxiii.

8. *The rock.* Cp. 1 Cor. x. 4.

PSALM CXV.

Historical occasion. A post-Captivity Psalm, full of rejoicing at the return to Judæa; probably intended for Temple worship. Some think that vv. 12-15 were sung by the priest, and the other verses by the congregation.

Christian application. As a Psalm of thanksgiving for abundant mercies, it may well be used by us, of whom God has indeed been mindful, in giving His only Son to die for us.

4-8. These verses show how, during the seventy years' Captivity, the very thought of idolatry had become hateful to the Hebrews.

12. *Hath been—will.* The past is an earnest of the future.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CXVI.

Historical occasion. Some incident perhaps of private life. The Psalm is no doubt of late date. From allusions to Psalms, evidently of David's time, we see what a deep impression he had made on the national mind.

Christian application. Any Christian who has passed through sorrow and trouble, and has found relief, can express his thankfulness to God for the benefits done unto him in the words of this Psalm.

7. *Thy rest, etc.* The rest arising from trust in God.

10. *I believed, etc.* Meaning not clear, but is quoted in sense of A. V. by St. Paul (2 Cor. iv. 13).

13. *The cup of salvation.* The cup of thanksgiving, for deliverances received. The Christian may apply it to the "Cup of blessing" in 1 Cor. x. 16.

15. *Precious in the sight, etc.* God values very highly the life of any one of His servants.

PSALM CXVII.

Historical occasion. Of late date, this Psalm, without any special occasion for its composition, breathes the wider sympathies always possessed by the finer spirits of the Hebrew people, and which found its full expression under the Gospel. See Deut. xxxii. 43; Rom. xv. 11. The Psalm was used probably in the Temple service as a doxology after other Psalms.

PSALM CXVIII.

Historical occasion. Uncertain, though the Psalm is of late date. Most probably, it was composed for the Feast of the Dedication of the second Temple (Ezra vi. 16-22). See vv. 19, 20, 22. It may be divided thus;—1-4. Full choral opening; 5-13. The call upon God in distress, with strong expressions of confidence—sung perhaps by half the choir; 14-18. Thanksgiving for deliverance—full choir; 19-27. Mingled prayer and praise—by half the choir; 28, 29. Full choral ending.

Christian application. From the very frequent allusion to or quotation of ver. 22 in the New Testament, and from the use made of vv. 25, 26 by the multitudes on our Lord's entry into Jerusalem, the Psalm becomes to the Christian a prophecy of His Divine

Lord. It was referred to the Messiah even by the Jews themselves, and is appropriate (see especially vv. 17-27) as a proper Psalm for Easter Day.

1. *O give thanks, etc.* A common form of thanksgiving. See 1 Chron xvi. 34; 2 Chron. v. 13; Jer. xxxiii. 11; Ezra iii. 11.

10, 11. *All nations, etc.* In allusion perhaps to difficulties mentioned in Ezra iv.

12. *Like bees.* Cp. Deut. i. 44. *Fire of thorns* quickly dies out.

22. *The stone.* Cp. the word of encouragement given by the prophet Zechariah (iv. 6-10) to Zerubbabel at the laying the foundation of the second Temple. But its highest reference is to our Lord. See Isa. xxviii. 16; Acts iv. 11; 1 Pet. ii. 7.

24. *This is the day.* The Lord's Day—the day of Christ's Resurrection.

*TWENTY-FOURTH DAY,—EVENING PRAYER; TO
THE TWENTY-SIXTH DAY,—EVENING PRAYER.*

PSALM CXIX.

Historical occasion. None suit it so well as the restoration of the Law under Ezra, who probably composed the Psalm. It is the longest and most elaborate of all the Psalms. It sets forth in fervent and glowing language the beauties of God's law, and the spiritual knowledge and blessedness which come of obedience to it. In every verse save two (122 and 132) mention is made of the law under one or other of the various names (or words) by which it was known to the Jews. In its structure the Psalm is highly artistic. Each of its twenty-two divisions of eight verses

begins with a different letter, going regularly through the Hebrew alphabet; and the same letter commences each verse of a division. In each division "some special excellence of God's law is celebrated."

Christian application. The pious Israelite saw, as this Psalm shows us, much of the depth of teaching in God's law given through Moses;—how much more may this Psalm express the feelings of the Christian, instructed, as he has been, by Christ's Sermon on the Mount.

7. *Thy judgments.* Word used here, and throughout the Psalm, in the sense of "law," "decrees," "precepts."

46. *Before kings.* Cp. Ezra vii. 11-28; Neh. ii. 1-8.

54. *In the house of my pilgrimage.* In the place where I have been in exile.

69. *Forged a lie.* "Have patched up a lie," as against Nehemiah (vi. 6-13).

83. *A bottle.* A picture, either (1) of the sad effect of trouble upon the Psalmist's life, as the shrivelling effect of smoke upon a skin bottle, or (2) of the ripening of his spiritual life through trial and sorrow, even as the wine was mellowed, by the bottles containing it being hung up in the smoke.

96. *I have seen, etc.* The meaning seems to be, that everything else has its season and time, and passes away, but God's law is infinite and everlasting.

100. *The ancients.* The aged men.

119. *Like dross.* Cp. Jer. vi. 28-30; Ezek. xxii. 18-22.

126. *Made void.* See the account in Ezra (x. 18) and Nehemiah (xiii. 4-7).

127. *Yea, above fine gold.* P. B. V. has "and precious stone," following the LXX., and so losing the parallelism of the verse.

140. *Very pure.* P. B. V. "tried to the uttermost." The purity is the result of the trial. Cp. Ps. xii. 6.

164. *Seven times, i.e. again and again.* Cp. Ps. lv. 17.

165. *Nothing shall offend them.* Things which occasion difficulty and doubt to others do not to them. And so St. John says, 1 Ep. ii. 10.

176. *I have gone astray, etc.* In spite of much watchfulness and great love, there are many failings. Cp. Luke xvii. 10.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CXX.

Historical occasion. This Psalm, with the next fourteen, form a kind of Psalter within a Psalter. They are all called "songs of the goings-up" (A. V. songs of degrees). They were evidently (see cxxvi.) collected into their present form after the Captivity. They were probably sung by the pilgrims from the rest of the Holy Land, as they went up (cp. John xii. 20) annually to keep the feasts in Jerusalem. Except Ps. cxxxii., these fifteen Psalms are all very short, and express each but one thought, hope, or feeling. This Ps. cxx. is a prayer for deliverance from the calumnies of his enemies.

Christian application. Both this Ps. cxx. and all the "songs of the goings-up"² can be used by the Christian as reflecting and expressing his own spiritual experience, whether of joy or sorrow.

3, 4. Either describe more fully the false tongue already spoken of (cp. Jer. ix. 8; James iii. 6), or the punishment awaiting it. Second perhaps better.

² Except perhaps Ps. cxxxii., which see.

Juniper. Broom, used for firewood.

5. *Mesech.* A wild tribe dwelling at the northern limit of the then known world, at the foot of the Caucasus (see Gen. x. 2).

Kedar. The representative tribe of the southern limit, South Arabia (cp. Song of Solomon i. 5 ; Isa. xxi. 13-17). These tribes are mentioned with a sort of horror, as extreme types of barbarism.

PSALM CXXI.

1. *The hills.* Of the Holy Land (cp. Nah. i. 15) ; to the Christian, of the heavenly country.

6. *Smite thee.* Sunstroke is a great danger in hot countries, (cp. 2 Kings iv. 18-20 ; Jonah iv. 8). So too the moon is known, in South America for instance, to exercise a bad effect on the eyes of one sleeping in the open air in the moonlight.

8. *Thy going out, etc.* Cp. Deut. xxviii. 6.

PSALM CXXII.

3. *Compact.* Effect of first sight of Jerusalem upon the pilgrim.

4. *The tribes go up.* In obedience to the law, Deut. xvi. 16.

4. *Unto the testimony, etc.* Rather a law, or ordinance, to Israel, which had been given by God.

6-9. A beautiful prayer, not destined to be fulfilled in the earthly (cp. Luke xix. 42), but only in the heavenly Jerusalem. Cp. Rev. xxi., xxii.

PSALM CXXIII.

2. *Unto the hand.* The servant of God awaits the

least sign of His will. The circumstances of Neh. ii. 1-8 answer well to this verse.

3. *Filled with contempt.* Cp. Neh. ii. 19 (where "we are despised" is literally "we are contempt) and iv. 4.

PSALM CXXIV.

1. *On our side.* With the thanksgiving of this Psalm, cp. the circumstances detailed in Neh. iv., vi.

3. *Quick.* Alive. Cp. Numb. xvi. 30, 33.

5. *Proud waters.* Powerful enemies. Isa. viii. 7, 8.

PSALM CXXV.

1. *They that trust.* The returned exiles in their great difficulties were encouraged by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, to one of whom this Psalm may be ascribed.

2. *So the Lord.* Cp. Zech. ii. 4, 5.

3. *The rod or sceptre, emblem of power.* Ezra iv. 3.
The lot of the righteous. The Holy Land.

5. *As turn aside.* Allusion perhaps to those Jews who sided with the enemies. Neh. vi. 10-14, xiii. 28-31.

LESSON XI.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CXXVI.

1. *When the Lord, etc.* The permission to the Jews to return to their own land was such a joyful fulfilling of prophecy, that it was like a dream. Job viii. 21.

4. *Turn again.* The first band of returned exiles was only a small company. The Psalmist now prays that those who were still in captivity might also return.

As the streams in the South. The meaning is "may they return to their land, bringing back joy and activity even as the rivers in the early spring, swollen by winter rains, fertilize the hot parched southern country."

Bearing precious seed. The allusion is to the many trials and afflictions of the Jews on their first return from captivity, and for many years after. But the seed they are sowing is precious, and will in the end bring forth good fruit. Cp. Hag. ii. 3-9, 17-19.

PSALM CXXVII.

1. *The house.* Either (1) the Temple, or (2) the house in which a man lives. So *the city*; either (1) Jerusalem, or (2) the particular city in which the man may be dwelling. Those who understand it in the first sense, either accept the Inscription—"of Solomon"—as correct, or regard the Psalm as an echo of Haggai's words of rebuke in chap. i. 2-11. If, as seems more likely, the second sense is correct, we have in this Psalm a very beautiful picture (of uncertain date) of the domestic life of a pious Israelite.

2. *His beloved sleep.* The meaning is "He blesseth His beloved while they sleep" unknown to themselves. They need not therefore be over-anxious or careful. Cp. Matt. vi. 25-34; Luke x. 41; 1 Pet. v. 7.

4. *Children of youth.* Children born to a man while he himself is yet young. Cp. Prov. v. 18; Gen. xxxvii. 3.

5. *In the gate.* The Eastern place of judgment. Deut xxi. 19; Ruth iv. 1. The reference seems however to be the promise made to Abraham, Gen. xxii. 17.

PSALM CXXVIII.

Another bright picture of the family life of the God-fearing Israelite, and of the blessings attending him; to encourage the newly returned exiles to live upright and pious lives. In a spiritual sense it may be taken to illustrate the fruitfulness of Christ's Church.

2. *The labour of thine hands.* The first part of the blessing. Cp. Lev. xxvi. 5-16, and Haggai i., ii.

3. *By the sides, i.e.* "in the inner parts." The words apply to the wife, whose duties are at home, not to the vine, which was not trained by the sides of the houses. The vine was the emblem of fruitfulness, and perhaps of dependence, as needing support; the olive, on the other hand, pictures strong vigorous life.¹

5. *Out of Zion.* As the dwelling-place of God, whence His blessings flow. Cp. Ps. iii. 4, xiv. 7.

The good of Jerusalem. The well-being of the state depended on the well-doing of its families.

PSALM CXXIX.

A strain of joy at deliverance from captivity.

¹ See Perowne.

1. *Many a time.* The history of Israel was one of constant conflict, often of defeat, sometimes of victory, of ever-repeated instances of God's mercy.

From my youth. The time spent in Egypt.

2. *Have not prevailed.* Cp. 2 Cor. iv. 8-10 for the Christian parallel.

3. *Furrows.* The wounds made by the lash on the slave's back. Cp. Isa. l. 6.

6. *Afore it groweth up.* Before it has had time to come to maturity. Cp. Isa. xxxvii. 27.

8. For the blessing, cp. Ruth ii. 4.

PSALM CXXX.

A Psalm of deep sorrow for sin, with a cry for mercy. It is the sixth of the Penitential Psalms, and is appropriately read on Ash Wednesday. The sorrow is perhaps national rather than personal.

1. *Out of the depths.* A frequent expression for heavy misery and affliction. Cp. Ps. lxi. 2-14; Isa. li. 10; Ezek. xxvii. 34.

4. *That Thou mayest be feared.* The effect of forgiveness on the truly penitent is fear, springing out of love, lest they should offend again. Cp. Jer. xxxiii. 9; 2 Cor. v. 14.

5. *In His Word, i.e.* His promise.

6. *They that watch, etc.* As a sentinel, as a sick man, as any who may have to keep awake all night. Cp. Deut. xxviii. 67.

8. *From all his iniquities.* Not from the punishment merely, but from the power and habit of sin.

PSALM CXXXI.

If not written by David, it breathes intensely his spirit of true humility. Cp. 2 Sam. vi. 22, xvi. 10.

1. Cp. Jer. xlv. 5.
2. *As a child that is weaned of his mother.* Rather, "as a weaned child upon his mother." Just as a child, after being weaned, no longer cries for the nourishment it at first missed, but reclines peacefully on its mother's bosom, so the Psalmist's soul, being broken it may be of its proud sinful longings, reclines upon God, and rests upon His promise.
3. Prayer that his nation may follow the Psalmist's example of patient hope.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CXXXII.

Historical occasion. This Psalm, in its length and the obscurity of its date and authorship, differs from the other Psalms of the goings-up. It seems most probable that it was composed for some reformation of the Temple service (see 2 Kings xii., xxii.), and afterwards appropriated by the returned exiles.

Christian application. The Psalm is Messianic, as St. Peter shows (Acts ii. 30), and the promise in ver. 11 renders it specially appropriate for Christmas Day.

1. *His afflictions.* Rather, "anxious cares," to build the Temple.

3. *Tabernacle of my house.* Poetical expression for his house.

6. *At Ephratah.* There is no thoroughly satisfactory explanation of this difficult verse. Perhaps the best is that the various reports about the ark reached Ephratah (Bethlehem), where David's youth was spent, and that when at last he was able to carry out his

long-cherished wish of bringing it to Zion, he found it at Kirjath-jearim, "the city of the woods."

10. *Turn not away.* "Refuse not the prayer," "deny me not," as in 1 Kings ii. 16. The verses 8-10 are taken nearly verbatim from Solomon's prayer in 2 Chron. vi. 41, 42. They prove that the Psalm is later than David's time, and the word "anointed" shows that it dates before the Captivity, as after that event there was in reality no "anointed" one.

11. *The Lord hath sworn.* Cp. 2 Sam. vii. 11-16; Acts ii. 30.

17. *The horn.* Emblem of power. *A lamp.* Emblem of prosperity. Cp. 1 Kings xi. 36.

PSALM CXXXIII.

Composed perhaps originally by David at the sight of some beautiful examples of family love and affection, this Psalm became to the exiles and the pilgrims a song of sweetness, exhorting them to national unity.

2. *The precious ointment.* Or rather "oil." Cp. Exod. xxx. 23-33; Lev. viii. 12, 30. The fragrance of the oil, to the composition of which many ingredients went, aptly pictures forth brotherly love.

3. *The dew of Hermon.* The moisture from the melting snows of Hermon descends upon the lower hills of Judæa, even as the oil flowed down from the head to the beard, etc. How ought this Psalm to speak to Christians!

PSALM CXXXIV.

The last of the pilgrim "songs of the up-goings." It forms a kind of final blessing to these songs.

1, 2. The words added in P. B. V., "even in the

courts," etc., are from the LXX. The Psalmist exhorts the priests, whose duty it is to keep the night-watch, to make their watch an opportunity for devotional exercise; and

3. The priests return answer by blessing the Psalmist.

PSALM CXXXV.

Historical occasion. The setting-up again probably after the Captivity of the Temple service. It is an exhortation to the Priests and Levites, resembling that of Ps. cxxxiv., and consisting in great degree of quotations from other Psalms and Books. See marg. ref.

Christian application. As the spiritual successors of Israel, Christians can take up this Psalm and sing it as their own.

4. *Peculiar treasure.* So Moses said, Exod. xix. 5; Deut. vii. 6, xiv. 2; and St. Peter transferred the title to Christians. See 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9.

21. *Out of Zion.* For from Zion has gone forth Jehovah's blessing in Christ Jesus to all the world.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CXXXVI.

Historical occasion. A post-exile Psalm of uncertain date, perhaps sung on the occasion of laying the foundation-stone of the second Temple. But it would suit many events in the reviving life of the nation at that time. See Ezra iii. 11; Neh. xii. 40. This Psalm resembles much Ps. cxxxv. Both no doubt had the same author. The structure of the Psalm is unusual. The first line of each verse pursues the subject of the Psalm, while the second line is a kind of chorus, sung

by the whole choir in response to the single voice which sang the first part.

Christian application. As a retrospect of Israelite history, it is of value to the Christian, enabling him the better to trace in His dealings with the chosen people God's Hand preparing the Messiah's way.

1. *For His mercy, etc.* This chorus was appointed to be sung by David. See 1 Chron. xvi. 41 ; 2 Chron. vii. 3, xx. 21 ; Neh. xii. 46.

6. *Stretched out, etc.* Cp. Isa. xlii. 5, xliv. 24.

26. After this verse the P. B. V. adds a 27th verse, which does not occur in the Hebrew.

PSALM CXXXVII.

Historical occasion. Written either during the Captivity, or else by some one immediately after his return to Jerusalem. It is intensely patriotic.

Christian application. In a spiritual sense this Psalm may be taken as the expression of the Christian's joy in the sense of deliverance from the captivity of sin, and restoration in Jesus Christ.

2. *The willows.* The weeping willow. 4. Cp. Neh. ii. 2, 3.

7. *Rase it, etc.* Refers to the evil conduct of the Edomites when the Jews were carried captive. See Obadiah 1-16. The conduct of Edom, a kindred and once subject nation, sank deeply into the Jewish heart.

8. *To be destroyed.* The P. B. V. has "wasted with misery." Babylon had already been taken by Cyrus (B.C. 538), and the Psalmist now looks forward to its complete overthrow, which happened B.C. 516. Cp. Isa. xxi. 9. Babylon was to the prophets the symbol of opposition of evil to good. Isa. xiv.

PSALM CXXXVIII.

Historical occasion. This and the next seven Psalms have been called "The Israelite's manual of *private* prayer and praise."² They are all ascribed to David, and if not his, they breathe his spirit and devotion. The LXX., in doubt as to authorship, add the names of Haggai and Zechariah to David's.

Christian application. These personal Psalms are full of expressions which suit the spiritual circumstances of God's servants in all ages.

1. *Before the gods.* Most probably "the heathen deities." The LXX. however, and others, render "in the presence of the angels."

2. *Thy holy Temple.* The Tabernacle, if the Psalm is David's. Cp. Ps. v. 7, where see note; Josh. vi. 24; 2 Sam. xii. 20. See also 2 Sam. vii. 18.

Thy Word above all Thy Name. More correct than P. B. V., which is that of the LXX. The Psalmist seems to refer to the special word of promise given to David (2 Sam. vii.), which marks a "new era in Scripture prophecy," and which St. Peter tells us (Acts ii. 30) David understood of the Messiah. It was a revelation above all previous revelations.

5. *In the ways.* Of, or concerning the ways.

8. *Will perfect.* Cp. David's prayer, 2 Sam. vii. 25-29.

² Bishop Wordsworth.

LESSON XII.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CXXXIX.

Historical occasion. Doubtful. The inscription assigns it to David, and its great beauty fully bears out the title. The so-called Aramaic forms found in it, and making it, as some think, of late date, may not improbably be simply dialectic variations, such as are common to all languages.

Christian application. There is no need of any special explanation. Every Christian heart can apply this Psalm.

2. *My downsitting.* Cp. Deut. vi. 7, and for verses 1-6 cp. Acts xvii. 28.

3. *Compassest.* Rather, searchest, winnowest.

7-12. Cp. Jer. xxiii. 23, 24.

9. *The sea.* The west. The rays of the morning sun shoot up from the east, and in a moment are shining in the west.

13. *Reins.* Kidneys, the seat of feeling, etc. with the Hebrew, as the *liver* with the Romans, and the *heart* with us.

13. *Covered me.* Thou didst weave me.

16. *All my members, etc.* Literally, "in Thy book were all these *things* (or *days*) written; days were formed, and there was not one of them." The meaning is, Thou sawest all the future, before even a single day had been made. Cp. Job x. 5-11,

18. *When I awake.* The Psalmist is so absorbed by his studies of God's attributes, that the moment he awakes his thoughts revert to his favourite theme.

19. Notice the abrupt transition from one subject to another.

24. *Wicked way.* Literally, "way of trouble, pain, or sorrow." Cp. Isa. xiv. 3.

PSALM CXL.

Historical occasion. Supposed by some to have been written when David was exposed to the malice of Saul and Doeg; others ascribe it and the next two Psalms to the evil persecuting times of Manasseh. It has several unusual words. All we can say is that from its style it may be David's.

Christian application. The Psalm may well be used as an appeal for God's help against our spiritual foes.

7. *Day of battle.* Literally, day of armour. Cp. 1 Sam. xvii. 45.

11. *An evil speaker.* P. B. V. is nearer Hebrew, "a man full of words," in the sense of the words being evil. Cp. ver. 3.

PSALM CXLI.

Historical occasion. Uncertain. Some assign it to the persecuting times of Manasseh, while others assign it with the inscription to David, and think it was written at the time of his flight from Absalom. It may be divided thus ;—1, 2. An evening prayer; 3, 4. Prayer for grace against temptation; 5-7. Excellence of a righteous man's reproof; 8-10. Renewed prayer against temptation, and the snares of the wicked.

Christian application. The Psalm may be used as a prayer against spiritual foes.

2. *Incense.* Symbolical of prayer. Rev. viii. 3, 4. The Psalmist alludes to the daily evening service of the Temple, from which, it would seem, he is excluded.

5-7. The meaning of these verses is obscure, chiefly because we know nothing of the circumstances under which the Psalm was written.

Excellent oil. The use of oil for anointing the body is a well-known custom in the East. Cp. Ps. xxiii. 5; Dan. x. 3. The Psalmist will bear cheerfully the rebukes of the righteous, and as for his enemies, his weapon against them shall always be prayer.

Their judges. Probably means that when the leaders of the enemies are overthrown, their followers will be ready to listen to words of reconciliation. Cp. events after deaths of Ahithophel and Absalom.

In stony places. They are hurled over the precipice on the rocks beneath. Cp. 2 Chron. xxv. 12.

Our bones. The allusion perhaps is to the staring appearance of the Psalmist and his friends from starvation; or it may be to some overthrow of the nation.

Cleaveth wood. Rather, "maketh furrows on the earth." Cp. Job xxxiii. 21.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CXLII.

Historical occasion. Uncertain, although its style would bear out the inscription. The cave may have been either that of Adullam (1 Sam. xxii. 1) or of Engedi (1 Sam. xxiv. 3, 4). Cp. Ps. lvii. The Psalm may have been found after the Exile in some book now lost, and added to the Psalter. Some think it was

written by a later hand in imitation of David's manner and others assign it to the times of Manasseh.

Christian application. Most fittingly may the Christian use it in any time of deep spiritual distress. In the old Sarum P. B. it was appointed for Good Friday.

4. *I looked.* Rather, "Look on the right hand." The Psalmist beseeches God to see how, though in a crowd, he is despised and uncared for.

7. *Out of prison.* Figurative. Cp. Isa. xlii. 7, where the same word is used.

Compass me about. To show their joy at my deliverance. The words are rendered by some, "shall crown themselves" in token of their joy.

PSALM CXLIII.

Historical occasion. Assigned in its inscription to David, of whose earnest longings after God the Psalm is full. But its quotations from other Psalms makes it probable that it is a post-Exile Psalm, written by one who had made David's songs his great study.

Christian application. The Psalm is the last of the seven Penitential Psalms, and is appointed for Ash-Wednesday. The Church therefore teaches us that it is for the use of those who feel their sinfulness, and desire God's pardon and grace.

2. *Be justified.* Rather, "is righteous, (or just)." Cp. Job ix. 15, x. 15; Ps. xix. 9. "He is just whom God acquits."

3. *Long dead.* Cp. Lam. iii. 6.

8. *In the morning, i.e.* soon, quickly. Cp. Ps. xc. 14.

9. *To hide me.* Cp. Col. iii. 3.

10. *Thy Spirit is good.* Rather, "let Thy good Spirit
" See P. B. V.

THIRTIETH DAY.—MORNING PRAYER.

PSALM CXLIV.

Historical occasion. The first eleven verses are probably a composition from other Psalms of David's, especially Ps. xviii. Desiring to inspire his nation by the thought of past glories, some later hand has prefixed these verses to a short Psalm (vv. 12-15) of his own, which is highly original, and breathes an earnest prayer for the renewed prosperity of the people.

Christian application. The Psalm represents the spiritual glories of our Divine Lord, Who with His voice pleads for His people. Heb. vii. 25.

6. *Scatter them, i.e. my enemies.* Ps. xviii. 9-14.

8. *Right hand of falsehood.* As having been lifted up in taking an oath, which was not kept. Cp. Gen. xiv. 22; Isa. lxii. 8.

10. *Unto kings.* The royal family of David.

12. *As plants—as corner-stones.* The vigour and activity of the youth is represented, and the beauty and home life of the maidens.

Of a palace. Perhaps "The temple," as P. B. V.

13. *Streets.* Rather, pastures, fields.

14. *Streets.* A different word, meaning the squares or open spaces in a city, where men congregate. Cp. 2 Chron. xxxii. 6; Neh. viii. 1.

PSALM CXLV. (An Alphabetical Psalm.)

Historical occasion. Quite uncertain. There can be little doubt but that the Psalm is later than David's time. It is a fine ode, celebrating God's care for all.

It alone of all the Psalms is called a Tehillah, a word meaning Praise. The Book of Psalms is called Tehillim, or Praises.

Christian application. It is a proper Psalm for Whit Sunday, and most fitly chosen for that great Festival on which God gave to His Church "diversities of gifts," but all through the same Spirit.

13. *An everlasting kingdom.* Literally, "a kingdom of all ages."

14. *All that fall.* Literally, "all the falling ones." Cp. Ps. xxxvii. 24.

21. *Let all flesh.* Upon whom God pours out of His Spirit. See Joel ii. 28.

PSALM CXLVI.

Historical occasion. This and the remaining four Psalms are without inscription. They are all Hallelujah Psalms, and are doubtless post-Exile. The LXX. ascribes this Psalm and the next two to Haggai and Zechariah, representing what is probably a true tradition.

Christian application. These five Psalms all seem to anticipate the great Hallelujahs of Rev. xix. 1-7. In this Psalm (cxlvi.) we have a prophecy in a spiritual sense of our Lord's work. Luke iv. 18, 19.

1. *Praise the Lord, i.e.* Hallelujah.

3. *In princes.* Such as Cyrus. It was the Lord Who stirred up his spirit. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 22; Ezra i. 1.

7. *Looseth the prisoners.* Alluding to the release of the captives in Babylon.

9. *The strangers—fatherless—widow.* The most defenceless persons. Cp. Ps. lxxviii. 5. See our Lord's promise, "I will not leave you comfortless" (literally, orphans), and its fulfilment. John xiv. 18; Acts ii. 1, 2.

THIRTIETH DAY.—EVENING PRAYER.

PSALM CXLVII.

Historical occasion. Probably the Festival of the Dedication of the Walls, and complete restoration of Jerusalem under Nehemiah (Neh. xii. 27). The Psalmist invites his nation to praise God for His great mercies to Zion.

Christian application. The Christian uses the Psalm as representing the building up of Christ's Church, the Spiritual Zion.

2. *The outcasts of Israel.* So Isa. xi. 12, lvi. 8, of the children of the Captivity. Cp. James i. 1.

4. *He telleth the number.* Cp. Isa. xl. 26. With this and the succeeding verses cp. Job xxxviii., xxxix.

8. *Upon the mountains.* The P. B. V., following LXX., add "and herb for the use of men," which is not in the Hebrew.

13. *The bars of thy gates.* Alludes to Neh. vii. 1-4.

14. *Finest of the wheat.* Literally, "fat of the wheat." Cp. Ps. lxxxi. 16. The blessing of Moses (Deut. xxxii. 14) is renewed.

PSALM CXLVIII.

Historical occasion. Doubtless the outburst of national joy following on the restoration of Jerusalem. The Psalmist calls upon all creation, both of heaven (1-6) and earth (7-14), to join in one grand hymn of praise.

Christian application. The Christian, in using this Psalm, looks onward to the time when that whole

creation which "now groaneth and travaileth in pain together" will be redeemed from its bondage, and able to praise God.

4. *Waters above the heavens.* Perhaps the clouds. Cp. Gen. i. 6, 7.

6. *Shall not pass, i.e.* shall not be broken; or, rather, "they shall not transgress it."

7. *Dragons.* "Sea-monsters," as in Gen. i. 21. See Manual I. p. 9.

11. *Kings of the earth.* Cp. Mal. i. 11.

12. *Young men, etc.* For the general call to praise Jehovah, cp. Neh. xii. 43.

14. Cp. Ps. lxxv. 5.

PSALM CXLIX.

Historical occasion. See on preceding Psalm. It would almost seem as if the Jews, in their reawakened enthusiasm, looked forward to future conquests.

Christian application. Only as a song of final victory over the enemies of the truth may the Christian use this Psalm. No Christian may use it of personal enemies.

4. *Beautify.* Or, make glorious. Cp. Isa. lv. 5, lx. 7, 9, lxi. 3.

5. *Their beds.* In comfort and rest, not in war, tumult, or captivity. Cp. Hosea vii. 14.

6. *A two-edged sword,*—which in the hands of the Christian is God's Word. See Heb. iv. 12, and cp. Rev. i. 16. We may compare with this verse Neh. iv. 17 and 2 Macc. xv. 27.

8. *To bind.* Cp. account of Joseph in Ps. cv. 22. For the spiritual side, cp. Isa. xlix. 7, 23; Ps. ii. 3, 9.

9. *The judgment written—this honour.* Just as the Israelites were commissioned by God to execute His judgment upon the Canaanites, so the saints of God are permitted to be His instruments in overcoming the spiritual enemies of the truth.

PSALM CL.

Historical occasion. The service of the Second Temple. It is a very grand close to the whole Psalter.

Christian application. The Christian here, as the Hebrew, is exhorted to praise God with every faculty he possesses—his whole body, soul and spirit.

1. *His sanctuary.* Both heavenly and earthly.

6. *Let everything that hath breath.* All living creation, as opposed to mere instruments. Gen. ii. 7. With this heart-stirring call to praise and adore the Great Creator the Book of Praises closes.

APPENDIX

ON THE LITURGICAL AND MUSICAL DIRECTIONS IN THE PSALMS.

1. *To the chief musician.*¹ Or, as we should say, "the precentor," whose duty it was either to set the Psalm to music, or to teach it to his choir. The names of three of David's precentors are preserved.²

Words describing the character of the Psalm.

2. *Maschil.*³ Either (1) a skilfully-composed hymn, or (2) one intended for instruction.

3. *Michtam.*⁴ Meaning very doubtful. Perhaps a favourite Psalm of the author, or one of "golden" or deep-meaning.

4. *Mizmor: a Psalm.*⁵ One to be sung *with* accompaniment.

5. *Shiggaion.*⁶ A poem written either on the spur of the moment, or in a wild irregular fashion.

6. *Shir: a song.*⁷ More general word than Mizmor. Probably a hymn which might be sung with or without accompaniment.

7. *Tephillah: a prayer.*⁸ Cp. Hab. iii. 1.

8. *A song of degrees.*⁹ See on Psalm cxx. page 102.

9. *To bring to remembrance.*¹⁰ Either (1) to recall before God the sufferings and sorrow of David, or possibly (2) to remind men of the glory and majesty of God.

¹ Ps. iv. and fifty-four others.

³ Ps. xxxii. and twelve others.

⁵ Ps. iii. and many others.

⁷ Ps. xviii. and many others.

⁹ Ps. cxx-cxxxiv.

² 1 Chron. vi. 33, 39, 44; xxv. 1.

⁴ Ps. xvi., lvi.-lx.

⁶ Ps. vii. Cp. Hab. iii. 1.

⁸ Ps. xvii., lxxxvi., xc., cii., cxlii.

¹⁰ Ps. xxxviii., lxx. Cp. 1 Chron. xvi. 4, "record."

*Words relating to the tune or instruments to which
the Psalm was to be sung.*

10. *Upon Aijeleth-Shahar.*¹ Literally, "upon the hind of the morning." The Psalm was to be sung to the tune of that name, or of a poem commencing with those words.

11. *Upon Alamoeth.*² Literally, "after the manner of maidens," i.e., most probably with treble or soprano voices.

12. *Al-taschith.*³ Literally, "destroy not." Probably the name of the tune, with a reference to David's circumstances at the time. See 1 Sam. xxvi. 9.

13. *Upon Gittith.*⁴ The Psalm was to be sung either (1) to the music of an instrument imported from the Philistine city of Gath, or (2) to some particular tune adapted from a Philistine measure.

14. *Upon Jonath-elem-rechokim.*⁵ Literally, "the dove of silence in distant lands." See note on No. 12.

15. *Upon Mahalath.*⁶ Either (1) some kind of stringed instrument, or (2) a melancholy chant or tune to which the Psalm was to be sung.

16. *Upon Mahalath Leannoeth.*⁷ The latter word means probably "for correction," or "humbling." The Psalm, in accordance with its character, was to be sung to some sad strain.

17. *Upon Muth-labben.*⁸ Literally, "upon the death of the son." The meaning is very obscure. Probably the name of a tune or hymn. It may however

¹ Ps. xxii.

³ Ps. lvii-lix., lxxv.

⁵ Ps. lvi.

⁷ Ps. lxxxviii.

² Ps. xli. Cp. 1 Chron. xv. 20, 21.

⁴ Ps. viii., lxxxi., lxxxiv.

⁶ Ps. liii.

⁸ Ps. ix.

be a fragment of a longer title, now lost, which read, "Upon Alamothe. For the sons of Korah."

18. *On Neginoth*; ¹ singular, *Neginah*.² Stringed instruments of various kinds, upon one or other of which the music accompanying the Psalm was to be played.

19. *Upon Nehiloth*.³ Most likely various perforated instruments, such as flutes, pipes, etc.

20. *Upon Sheminith*.⁴ Literally, "upon the eighth." Cp. 1 Chron. xv. 21. The meaning seems to be that the Psalm was to be sung by deep-sounding, bass voices.

21. *Upon Shoshannim*.⁵ Lilies. *Shushan-eduth*.⁶ Lily of the Testimony. *Shoshannim-eduth*.⁷ Lilies of the Testimony. Either a tune of the name, or an instrument shaped like a lily, the music of which accompanied the Psalm.

Musical Signs.

22. *Higgaion*.⁸ A musical sign or note directing apparently an interlude of instrumental music.

23. *Selah*.⁹ Occurs seventy-one times in the Psalms, and thrice in Habakkuk. A word of very uncertain meaning. It is certainly some kind of musical direction, denoting, perhaps, some pause in the singing, or the place for a short interlude of instrumental music.

¹ Ps. iv. and five others.

² Ps. lxi.

³ Ps. v.

⁴ Ps. vi., xii.

⁵ Ps. xlv., lxix.

⁶ Ps. lx.

⁷ Ps. lxxx. Cp. 1 Kings vii. 19, 22, 26.

⁸ Ps. ix. 16; Ps. xix. 14 (meditation); Ps. xcii. 3 (with a solemn sound).

⁹ Ps. iii. and thirty-eight others; Hab. iii. 3, 9, 13.

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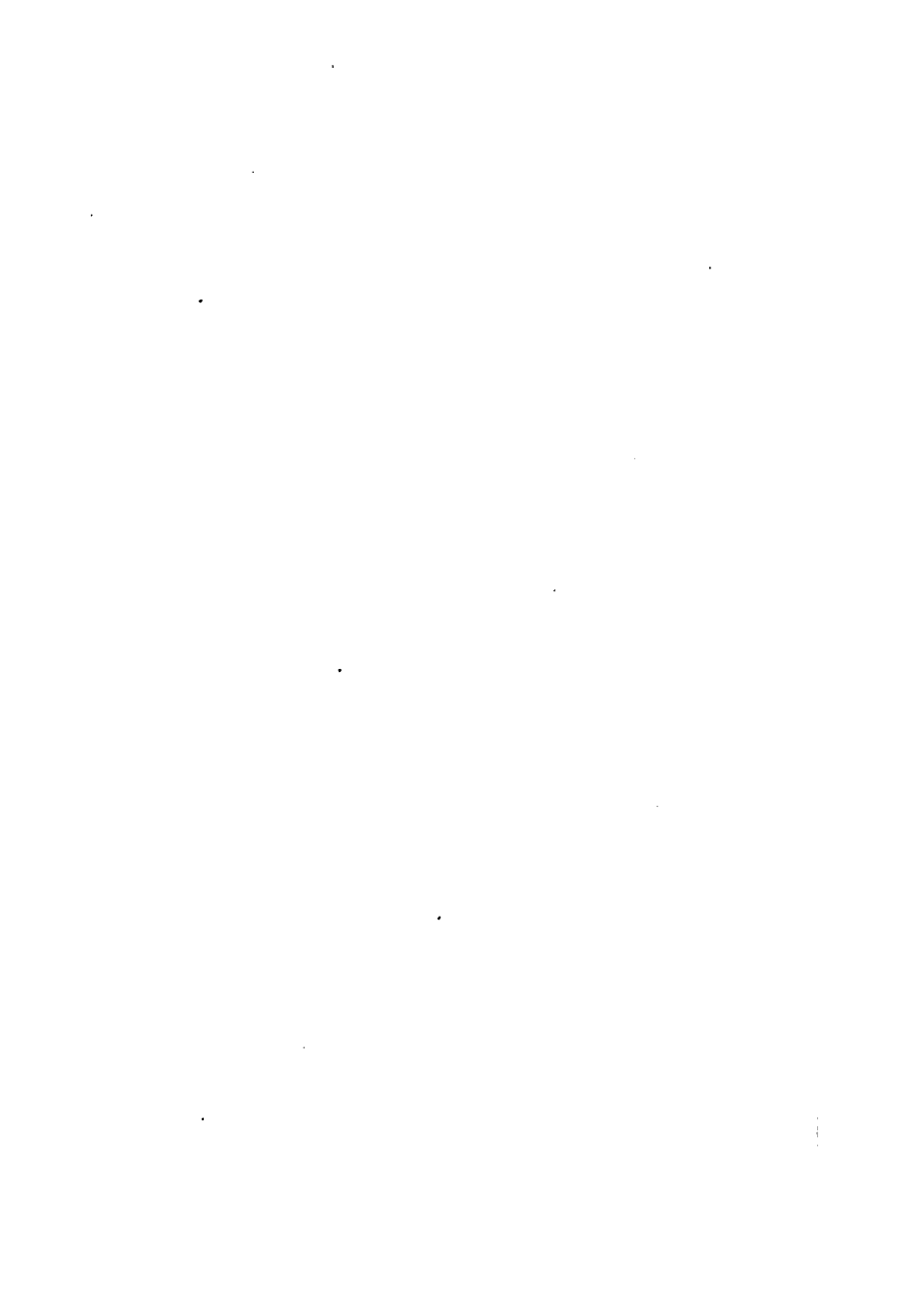
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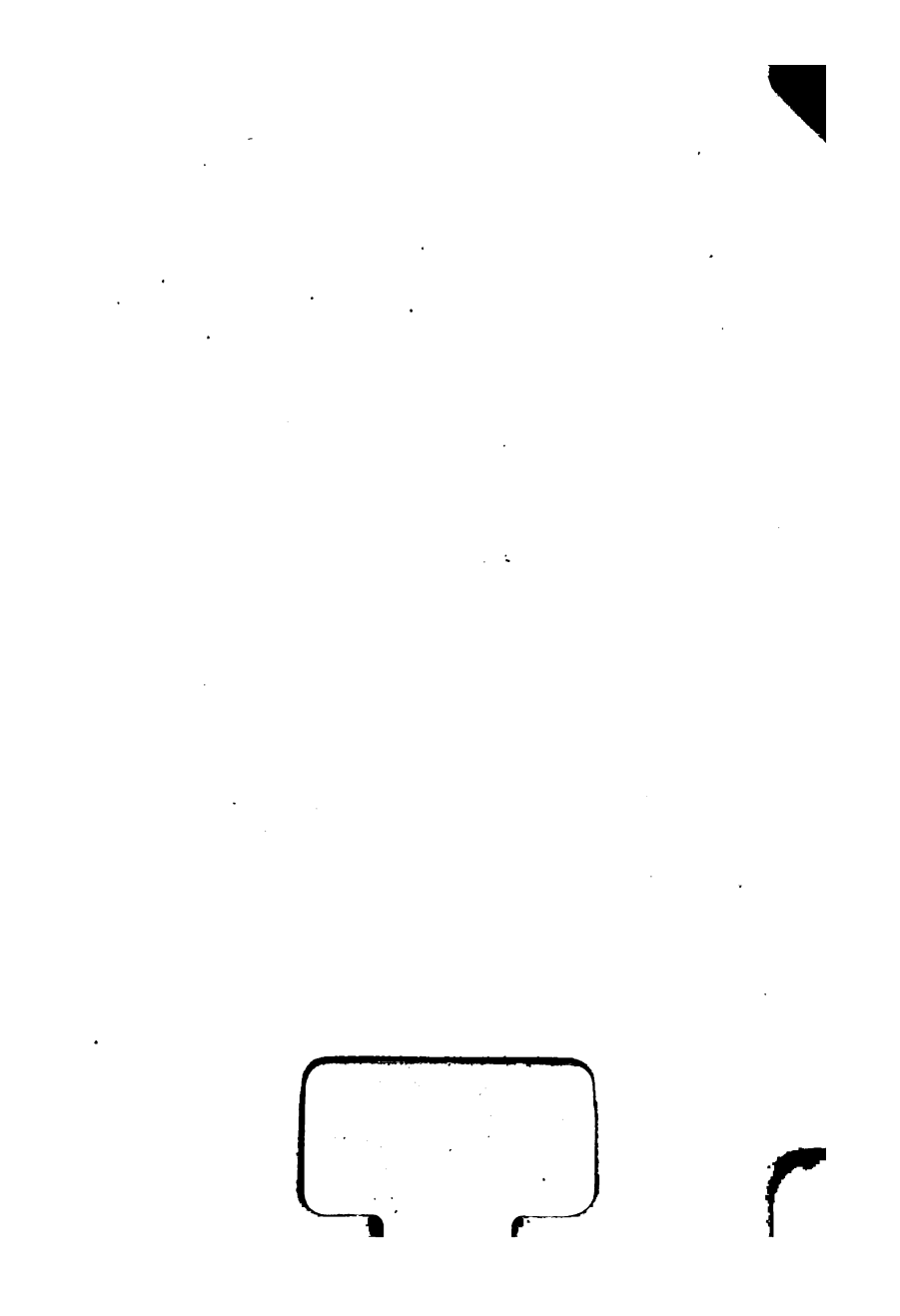
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